Understanding Children

LEWIS JOSEPH SHERRILL

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John W. Langdale, General Editor

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Paul H. Vieth, Editor

UNDERSTANDING CHILDREN

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To

JOHN LEWIS SHERRILL

AND

MARY HARDWICKE SHERRILL

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EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

NEXT to his own Christian purpose and conviction the greatest need of the teacher is to understand the pupils whom he teaches. For, important as may be the tradition which it is his to mediate, the final purpose in his work is with persons and their growth toward and into more Christlike living. To this end he needs an understanding of what children are, how they became what they now are, how they may become what we would like them to be, how to recognize in them the signs of growth.

The science of psychology and the technique of child study have given us an almost inexhaustible reservoir of data toward the understanding of children. But the very abundance of the data and the conflicting voices of the investigators constitute a barrier to the understanding which the lay worker would like to achieve. What he needs is a sympathetic friend who, on the one hand, understands the needs of the workers, and on the other hand, has undergone the discipline necessary to know and understand what science has to offer. Such an understanding friend has come forward to share his knowledge and insight with the church-school worker and parent in the chapters which follow. His work may be depended upon to be thoroughly scholarly, and yet it is expressed in the simple language of everyday living, for he too is a teacher and a parent.

In these chapters the purpose of religious education

has been kept constantly in mind. It is the teacher of religion who is addressed; it is the religious growth of the child which is under consideration. In pointing out what may be done by human teachers in helping the pupils to grow religiously the author has never forgotten that the Spirit of God is at work in the human spirit, and that it is by the guidance of this Holy Spirit and not in his own power alone that the worker may achieve.

The temptation to deal with children in the abstract, which is so alluring to anyone who writes on this subject, has been avoided in this presentation. This has been done through illuminating the more theoretical findings of psychology with numerous illustrations which burst right out of life, and, best of all, by leading the student to "adopt" a child of his own for intimate acquaintance as he pursues this study.

The Rev. Lewis Joseph Sherrill is the Dean and Mary Hamilton Duncan Professor of Religious Education in the Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky. He has been a favorite member of the faculty in the training school at Montreat, North Carolina, for many summers, as well as in numerous local training schools and institutes. The many students who have there been helped by him to appreciate and understand children will welcome the opportunity which this book presents to bring the inspiration of his teaching to thousands of other earnest workers with children.

PAUL H. VIETH.

PREFACE

THE aim in this book is to help teachers toward a better understanding of children, to the end that there may be more effective teaching of the Christian religion to children.

The point of view is that in the teaching of the Christian religion there are two central purposes. The first is to lead children into awareness of God, so that the first and great commandment may begin to be fulfilled in children through our teaching—"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy mind." And since "the second is like unto it," the other and kindred purpose is to lead children into awareness of the neighbor.

Both these purposes converge into one which is often expressed by saying that our great aim in Christian education is the development of Christian personalities in a Christian social order.

In this book we are to consider the development of Christian personality during childhood, that is, in persons until about twelve years of age.

It is best to define the terms "personality" and "character" at the outset. By "personality" we mean the total of what one has become at any given time. It refers usually to the very complex inner world with its ideas, ideals, motives, conflicts, and purposes. It may refer also to the impression which one creates upon others because of what he is within. It is a more inclusive term than "character."

By "character" we mean the moral aspect of personality, especially in its social relations. It usually refers to conduct, and carries the reminder that personality functions in a social setting where one's behavior is properly a concern of others, subject to approval and disapproval because it affects the life and welfare of others.

Using This Book

A group using this book as the basis of a study course will probably wish to employ the usual methods of supplementary reading and discussion. Suggestions are included for that purpose.

But if one is to make the study a genuine venture in understanding children, he must deal with actual boys and girls. We suggest that, if possible, one attempt to enter further into friendship with a particular child during the course. It will be easier to carry out such a plan if the course extends over several weeks, than if it must be completed within one week. But it can be done in the latter case; and in either event the effort to understand one child will probably make the study far more real than if one thinks only in impersonal terms.

It is well to raise the question, at the first meeting of the group, whether it is possible to include this plan as a part of the course. If included as a principal feature, each one who is able to carry it out may wish to write up the results as a report of his major undertaking during the course.

The outline of the book, while not depending upon this plan, lends itself readily to this feature of a course. Each chapter constitutes a step in thought about chil-

dren, and may also provide the background for the better understanding of a particular child.

At the end of each chapter, in addition to questions suggested for group discussion, there are a few questions regarding "My Friend." They point to items of information about a particular child, which it is important to have if one is to understand that child. If desired, certain of these might be selected to be written on, in the chief paper of the course. This written work may be broken up into three to five sections, to be turned in at regular intervals during the course.

Since the book consists of ten chapters, at least two alternatives are open in using it as the guide in a twelve-hour course. One is to expand the time allowed for those subjects where the interest and need of the group seem greatest. The other is to reserve two periods for consideration of the general question: What should my part be in the further development of Christian personality in my friends among children? The records written up by members of the group will lead very naturally to that question, and will provide ample material for group use. In this manner the group will have opportunity to share with one another any insights gained into principles and means for guiding the growth of Christian personality during childhood, while keeping the whole matter very close to actual children whom we know and love.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A personal obligation is gratefully acknowledged to Professor Hugh Hartshorne, Miss Ethel Smither, Miss

Atha Bowman, Miss Mary Alice Jones, Miss Hazel Lewis, and especially to Professor Paul H. Vieth. Out of rich experience with children and teachers of children, they generously gave time and counsel during the preparation of this book. While they must not be thought responsible for the way in which I have sought to use each suggestion, I am conscious of my indebtedness at almost every page.

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Louisville, Kentucky.

CHAPTER I

UNDERSTANDING CHILDREN

What Is "Understanding Children"?

Among the people you know, you probably can think of teachers who affect children in quite opposite ways. Perhaps they are somewhat like two whom I have in mind.

One, the wife of a merchant in a home with every advantage, is well informed, capable in many ways, and generous with time and money. She desires to teach in the church, yet by her own admission she knows nothing about children, and is rather uncomfortable with them. The children sense a lack and stand off, so that a gulf is fixed between the teacher and them. She throws true words about Christian experience and Christian living across that gulf, and the children try faithfully to throw them back. But there is no genuine fellowship in the teaching, no sharing of selves.

The other teacher has this significant thing true of her: children always seem to be moving toward the place where she is. I have often watched some child go to her, and as soon as she begins to talk, one impression invariably stands out. It is not that children are attracted by her beauty, for she is rather homely. It is not that motherhood has given her any insight denied to others, for she is childless, indeed unmarried. But from her very first words with any child, one always feels

that she is trying to see life through the eyes of that particular child.

In an amazingly short time she knows a child's likes and dislikes, his desires and his difficulties, and is sharing her own rich personality with him. Soon a child is moving toward the place where she is spiritually, as well as physically. And the results are just the same when she deals with groups of children. Experiences and expressions of joy, gratitude, fellowship with one another and with God, all well up spontaneously from the children under her leadership.

Observe where the difference lies. The one teacher has full regard for what the children are today, at the very same time that she is trying to lead them toward what they might become. The other has rather little interest in children as they actually are, here and now, but fastens her attention chiefly on what she wishes them to become; she thinks much of the truth she seeks to teach, but apparently she thinks of the children very little.

These contrasts point toward what we mean by "understanding children." It implies respect for personality, so that we feel a child is entitled to be treated as a person, with courtesy and considerateness, whatever his age, circumstances, personality, or character.

It also implies that we have full regard for a child as he is now. It goes without saying that we are interested in his future also, for we have our goals toward which we work, and our prayerful hopes for what he may become. But we begin where he is, and we share with him in his sense of the value of his present experience. It is

as good to him as it is to us adults to feel secure because he is loved, to feel happy in what he is doing, to find relief from suffering, to make choices which others respect, to share with others, and to co-operate in significant undertakings.

And it implies, of course, that we should know as much about him and about other children as we have any right to know. Obviously, we cannot have full regard for what he is now, without such knowledge.

The understanding of children, then, is based on facts; but these facts are seen always in the light of respect for personality, and regard for the child that now is as well as the person that is to be.

Why Is Understanding Essential in Teaching?

Why does a Christian teacher of children need to understand them if he is to teach them? The necessity grows out of the nature of teaching. Teaching is guiding the changes that take place in persons. But at its best it is not an autocratic process in which an all-wise teacher is filling up an ignorant pupil; rather it means a genuine sharing with others in experiences which have meaning and worth, both for the teacher and for those who are taught. During such experiences changes take place. But a teacher cannot very helpfully share experience with children unless he understands children. Consider a few respects in which this is especially important in Christian teaching.

Home Background. Mr. Clarence Day has written of the religious influences in his boyhood. The father disapproved of the rector of the family's church, and would

never put more than a dollar in the offering, no matter what the cause or the plea. The mother remonstrated, until at last the father made a compromise. He put a dollar in his right pocket, and a five dollar bill in his left pocket. Let the rector "preach a decent sermon for once," and in would go the five. Mr. Day writes of the way this influenced the boys' hearing of each sermon:[1]

> This made every sermon a sporting event, in our pew. When Doctor Garden entered the pulpit, we boys watched with a thrill, as though he were a racehorse at the barrier, jockeying for a good start. He looked rather fat for a racehorse, but he was impressive and confident, and it was kind of awe-inspiring to see him go down every time to defeat. . . .
>
> "I don't see what the matter was today," mother would declare, going home. "You should have given more than a dollar today, Clare. It was a very nice sermon." But father would merely say with a twinkle that Garden ought to get a new barrelful.

Suppose that you as a teacher have a boy in your group from a home where a similar situation exists. One of your aims is to develop in your children "the growing ability and disposition to participate in the organized society of Christians—the church," and one of the ways in which you try to accomplish this aim is by "bringing about a happy relationship between the children and the minister."

But unless you know the attitude in the family, you are completely unaware what a train of ideas is set running in the boy's mind at the very mention of the minister and

[1] Day, Clarence, *God and My Father,* pp. 33-34. Alfred A. Knopf, 1935.

his preaching! He nudges a companion, whispers something, and they laugh until they break up what you are trying to do—but you still are in the dark. It is evident that you cannot guide the boy into the desired changes of attitude toward the church until you know the situation which actually exists.

And any teacher can recall many other instances to show that the most realistic knowledge of home background is essential if one is to understand the children of his group; and that without such knowledge he is unable to make progress.

Learning. Teaching, we said, is guiding the changes that take place in persons, during genuinely shared experience. The changes which take place are called "learning." We cannot teach children effectively without understanding how these changes come about. Two examples will suffice here, from many which might be given.[2]

Certain conditions are favorable to the kinds of learning which the teacher wishes to have take place in the school, and certain other conditions are unfavorable to such learning. The teacher needs to know what these are, so that he may most effectively use the teaching opportunities which he has.

Again, many teachers spend a large proportion of the teaching time which is available, in securing memorization of materials which children do not understand. The procedure is often justified by saying that the matter memorized will be of great profit to the children because

[2] The first example is discussed more fully in Chap. V, and the second in Chap. VI.

they will understand and use it later. But a prior question is, Will the children remember the material at all? The teacher needs to know the facts about forgetting, and honestly to take them into account.

Thinking. The teaching of religion to children presents an especially difficult problem because of the nature of the words used to express great religious ideas. Many of the key words are abstract and symbolical. The use of such terms is very common among adults, but not among children.

Hence misunderstanding and misconception of religious ideas are very prevalent among children. Not knowing what the words mean, and not being able to think readily in abstract terms, children often form mental images which rather completely prevent them from understanding what the adult means.

An instance recently related by a mother will illustrate. Her daughter, about nine years old, thought of God as just a head, with no body, and pictured the head as stuck full of spears. Apparently the mental image had been formed on the basis of two definitions of God which the child had learned. One of these refers to the "three Persons in the Godhead," while the other states that "God is a Spirit, and has not a body like men." The abstract idea "Godhead" was understood very literally by the child, as meaning a head; the other definition stated pointedly that "He has not a body." The word "Spirit" being unfamiliar to the child, suggested a similar word which she did know, namely, "spear." Hence it was very natural for her to form the image of the detached head stuck with spears.

Language is a means of conveying ideas, and if the words used distort the ideas, they may be more of a menace than a help. And since children's thinking is different from that of adults, it is exceedingly important for Christian teachers to understand children's thinking, so that the words used may minister to a child's understanding of religious truth.

Living. You wish to lead children into Christian ways of living with people. Often you are encouraged by the success which follows your work, but often you are also very perplexed by the problems in the conduct of children.

You will be helped by knowing the kinds of "behavior problems" which are common among children. Frequently such knowledge will save you from supposing that some child in your group is unusually "bad" or "troublesome"; and knowledge of ways in which such behavior has been changed in other children will suggest helpful ways which you might use.

But you will be helped much more, in proportion as you find it possible to understand children's motives, and see their world and its difficulties through their eyes. Repeatedly you will find that this kind of understanding is the only road to the help which you wish to bring a child in his efforts to meet his world adequately, in a Christian way.

Awareness of God. Do you sometimes try in imagination to picture the persons you wish to help the children of your group to become? If so, you must have been impressed by the extent to which their entire personalities would be related to God, if they fulfilled your

hopes. Each particular purpose which you have, carried you back finally to some aspect of a relation to God and an awareness of Him which you wish your children to have. This, more than any other single feature, distinguishes Christian education from other education. This, more than any other phase of our work, is our unique opportunity in Christian teaching.

But it is the most difficult part of our work as well. A child is not born with ideas of God, he cannot see God, yet you are to help him toward an understanding and love of God.

In the effort to do this, you have to rely in part on ideas expressed in words. Yet we have just seen, in speaking of children's thinking, how difficult it is to cultivate the awareness of God which we desire children to have when we rely on the words about God, especially on definitions of God. Many of the chief words which adults use to describe God are wholly unfamiliar to a child, and his experience furnishes him nothing with which to interpret the words.

Indeed, the meaning which children find in the word "God" itself must be supplied out of experiences which the child himself has. You can realize that there is no other way for him to understand the idea "God," if you think of your own efforts to imagine what a thing is like, when you have never seen it.

Let Gordon B. Enders tell a story which will illustrate the kind of mental happenings which take place when we try to form an idea of something we have never seen. Enders spent his boyhood in India, and there he heard of the first airplane constructed by the Wrights in North

Carolina. He and his friends tried to conceive what an airplane would be like.

Chanti, a Tibetan friend, pictured the airplane as being like a soaring Himalayan eagle, for the eagle was familiar to him as a creature of the air. Jowar, an Indian, thought of it as a bullock cart with wings; for as an Indian, those carts loomed large in his stock of mental furniture. Enders, who was very fond of flying kites, imagined the airplane would look like a kite with flapping wings. But when they tried to imagine what was meant by "propeller," they were all at a loss, for none of them had any experience with which to give body to that idea.[3]

Now, something very like that process happens in our becoming aware of God. We understand God in the light of our experience. God's revelation of Himself to men made use of that principle. The prophets furnish numerous examples. Jesus relied very largely upon man's experience with his fellow men, to aid people in understanding the character of God, one of His principal terms in speaking of God, being "Father." The Christian finds in Jesus Christ the supreme revelation of God, but even the Christian's experience of Christ is *our* experience of Him, and the better we know Him, the better we know God; so that the principle holds true here.

And we must rely on that same principle in leading children to awareness of God. Biblical conceptions of God, especially from Jesus, furnish the source from

[3] Enders, G. B., *Nowhere Else in the World,* p. 76. Farrar & Rinehart, 1935.

which we draw our own ideas of God. But the Biblical conceptions, understood by an adult, may be very remote, unreal, and perhaps quite unintelligible to a child, until clothed in terms of childhood experience.

You see how inevitably this leads us once more to a recognition of our need of understanding children if we are to teach them. For the experiences which will mean most to a child in coming to his own awareness of God, can be most effectively used by an adult *only when seen through the child's eyes.*

Take, for example, this incident from the life of John Todd. Both parents had died, and his aunt had agreed to give him a home. Now she was old, facing death, and afraid. What would death be like? John, who was now in middle life, wrote her:[4]

It is now thirty-five years since my father died, and left me, a little boy six years old, without a mother, without a home, and with nobody to care for me. It was then that you sent word you would take me and give me a home, and be as a mother to me. At length the day was set when I was to go to you, ten miles off. What a long journey it seemed to me! By and by the evening and the darkness came on, and I felt afraid. I trembled, and I wondered why I could not have somebody with me besides black Caesar.

But at last we came out of the woods, and I was told which light was in your house. And when we got there you came out, and took me in your arms; and you led me gently in; and there was the blazing, warm fire, and the bright light, and the table spread, and the supper all waiting for me! And that was my home! You warmed me,

[4] Todd, John E. (ed.), *John Todd: The Story of His Life,* pp. 35-37. New York, 1876.

and put me to bed in the strange room, and heard me say my prayers, and stayed with me till I was fast asleep!

And now you see why I have recalled all this to your memory. Your Heavenly Father will send for you. He will carry you safely through the darkness of the way. You need not feel afraid, for He knows the way, and will take you directly to your home. Receive it all as the little child did, and you will find the home.

A tired and bewildered little boy had found love and a welcome waiting; and there in that experience, always afterward, was something to help him understand God.

The children of your group have experiences as full of meaning to them as this one was to John. And it is your privilege, through understanding children, to do as Jesus did long ago—to see life through the eyes of the persons you teach, to take the homely experiences of your children, and through these experiences show your children what God is like, leading them thus to loving trust in Him.

How May We Understand Children Better?

How, then, may we understand children better, if it is of basic importance in Christian teaching to do so? There are two principal ways: by studying about them, and by being friends with them. Each of these ways supplements the other, and we shall speak of them in turn.

Study of Children. The scientific study of children has grown to remarkable proportions. It has been carried on in universities, and by great endowed foundations. So notable have been the results that many have

come to speak of the discovery of the child in the twentieth century, just as previous centuries were known for the discovery of a continent, or the rediscovery of learning, or the rebirth of religion.

The findings of this kind of study are gathered up in that branch of psychology called "child psychology." In it there is much help for teachers, parents, and ministers, in the understanding of children. This aid is brought chiefly through more accurate observation of children's behavior and growing personality. This is done in two ways. The first is by enabling us to see through the eyes of trained observers. We thus discover facts which are before our eyes just as truly as before theirs, but which elude us when we are not trained to see them. We also may discover interpretations of facts which we had known, but never understood.

The second is perhaps even more important, namely, the training of ourselves in becoming more accurate observers. We thus become more alert to the significant facts about the children with whom we are closely associated.

From this better understanding of children through studying about them, there should come better ways of dealing with them. We must understand that there are no magic formulas, no panaceas for our difficulties. Child psychology offers no shortcuts to success in dealing with children. But when one understands more thoroughly a situation or a problem which he confronts, he is in better position to treat it with intelligence, rather than by rule of thumb which has grown up from generations of mere tradition about dealing with children.

We are to consider in this book some of the data from child psychology which bear especially on the purposes of a teacher of children in the church, and that teacher's need for a better understanding of children. We shall cite the results of many studies and experiments which throw light on children's nature and behavior, and on the growth of personality and character during childhood.

Material of this kind is very voluminous, and only a small part of it can be used in a book of this size. In the background is a great mass of information, some of which is listed in the references. Students will profit by reading other treatments of child psychology, giving fuller information than space permits in this book.

But if you genuinely desire to come to a better understanding of children, there is a distinct limit to the service which studying about children can render you. Whatever information you gain from books about children needs to be made real and personal through friendship with actual children.

Friendship With Children. One may rate James Whitcomb Riley as a poet, according to his taste in poetry. But in the field of childhood delineation Riley achieved a place which few if any other poets have reached. One critic calls his poems on children pure genius; and remarks that his success with such poems was chiefly owing to the fact that he really loved children. Having a childlike heart himself, he could enter into their secrets.

It is open to us to have such a relation with a surprising number of children, if we are willing to pave the

way and take the time. Many children are really hungry for friendship with adults. This will be especially true if they do not find the needed affection at home; but even where they do have that, they still are eager often for emotional footing in the adult world. So frequently they are either patronized, or made afraid, or ignored by grown folk, that they respond avidly to a mature and respected man or woman who treats them as persons in every way.

Speaking not as one who counts himself to have attained in this rich realm, but certainly as one who has genuinely enjoyed friendships with children, I think the friendships have come about in two ways.

One is by making it possible for children to share with me in doing something at which I was occupied. One of my boy friends says he means to be a nurseryman because of the good hours we have had together in my garden.

The other is by sharing in some hobby of theirs. Arrow heads and Indian lore, stamp collecting, or any boys' realms I have a key for entering, furnish us a bond for months at the time.

But there are so many other kinds of possibilities, which each adult may use in keeping with his own bent. One of the most meaningful friendships between an adult and a child in my knowledge, came about when a boy's mother was seriously ill for a long while and finally died. A woman living near took the mother's part in many ways during the time of distress and continued to do so during the years immediately afterward. The understanding that grew up has weathered all the

later changes, and has continued to be a place of anchorage for the boy.

Another adult who has an unusual number of friendships with children, succeeds in finding numerous ways of drawing out the unique personality of each child, especially by making opportunities for "just talking" with a child. She makes a point of often writing letters or cards to children, keeping alive the sense of individual relation during absences. Each child regards her return as a great event.

With boys, companionship in the open, as in camping, fishing, in sports and the like, is usually a treasured experience. It will open the way to fellowship which is almost impossible under other circumstances.

When once we have found common ground with a child, we do well to encourage normal and natural conversation within the range of his interests. At the beginning of the acquaintance, a child will often be decidedly on guard, because many adults ask such foolish questions, instead of talking naturally about things which interest a child. But once he opens to an understanding friend whom he trusts, then the gates seem all to be unbarred!

For his part, he will welcome it, as long as it is natural. For your part, you will find it immensely rewarding for its own sake, and in addition you will learn more of the way life looks and feels to a child, than through all the books and addresses about children. But always you must let *him* decide how much of himself he will reveal even to a friend. Begin probing directly into his feelings, and he closes up; and rightly so. Perhaps he senses

that you are then not sharing, but taking. A woman, commenting appreciatively on a friend she admired when she was a child, said, "She never asked me how I felt about things when I was alone." A tribute!

Is it possible that you might make the reading of this book, or the study of a course based on it, the occasion of a new venture in friendship with at least one child? If you can select some one boy or girl for especial thought and better acquaintance, you may find this closer friendship and better understanding the most rewarding experience connected with this study.

Suggestions for Discussion

1. Members of the group may be able to recall notable instances of adults who could be truly called friends of children. One or more such instances might be analyzed, to discover what made this adult-child relationship distinctive.

2. What differences do you see between the results of church teaching done by (*a*) a person who understands children well, and (*b*) a person who understands children poorly?

3. Consider any of the material headed "Why is understanding essential in teaching?" which the group may wish to discuss. Make it clear that problems raised here cannot be fully considered until seen in light of the corresponding material later in the course.

4. Are there reasons not mentioned in this chapter, why understanding is essential in Christian teaching?

5. What values do you see for parents, teachers, and ministers in the study of child psychology? What risks?

6. Does it seem to this group practical to include, as a major part of this course, a venture in better acquaintance and friendship with particular children, as suggested in the

introduction? If so, does the group wish to include this as a part of their plan for the course? In the event you do, will it be wise for a parent to choose his own child? For a teacher to choose a child who presents distinctive problems from the teacher's point of view?

7. Let members of the group mention a few typical children known to them; and then consider how they would go about establishing a point of contact with them, in the hope of entering a deeper friendship outside the church situation.

Other Reading

Groves, E. R., and Groves, G. H., "Getting Acquainted With Children," *Parents' Magazine*, July, 1937, p. 17f.

CHAPTER II

HOME AND SURROUNDINGS

Your Need to Understand

A CHILD usually comes to your group from a family. You can no more understand him without knowing his home and surroundings than you can think of a plant detached from the soil which nourishes it. When you first know him, you may feel that he is angelic, or perhaps you could agree that he must be akin to the imps; but as you come to know his environment, you begin to see that in very large measure he is what he is because of the people he lives with, and because of the way they live together.

You come to realize, then, that you cannot understand a child without knowing about the adults in his family, the relations between his parents, the relations between himself and his parents, his relations with other brothers and sisters if there are such, and the social and economic background in which all these people live.

As you gain this knowledge and understanding, several important results begin to appear in your work. You are less likely to overpraise a "good" child, because you can better see the danger that he will become smug over certain achievements while he neglects others which are greatly needed in that family setting. You have little tendency to blame and criticize a difficult child, because you find you are feeling "with" him and not

"against" him. You can more intelligently work with the wholesome influences that already exist. You can more readily see a child's needs for certain elements in personal relations, which are lacking in his life; and you may be able to supply a part of what he is missing.

Adults in the Family

The adults and other persons in a child's family who are older than he, tend to reproduce some part of themselves in that child. Often a child will carry the marks of many adult personalities within his own.

Margaret Widdemer has recently attempted to identify the factors in her own makeup which she could trace back to one or another of the adults with whom she was associated as a child. The mother encouraged creative activity of every kind, from clay-modeling to hymn writing. The father, a "domineering" individual, prevented the usual contacts with other children, especially boys; and would not allow her to go to a school of any kind.

She spent much of her time in the grandparents' home. There the grandfather encouraged her to read, taught her his own ethics, and talked to her about what she should do when she was grown. The grandmother tried to keep her an infant, while an aunt constantly gave her the feeling of being under a microscope, and led her to adopt what she later regarded as false standards in literature and music.[1]

In a somewhat similar manner, if we know the circumstances, we may be able to discern in each child some-

[1] Widdemer, M., in *Parents' Magazine,* June, 1937, p. 31f.

thing of the mother and the father, and of other closely associated relatives when there are such in the household.

However, knowing the older persons in a home is only a first step toward understanding the child from that home. Between the persons in a group there exist "relationships," and the nature of these is most important in shaping the personalities of children within a family group. Accordingly, we should also consider the relationships within a child's family. Of especial significance are those which exist between his parents, and between parents and child.

Relations Between Parents

The relationships between the husband and wife belong in two classes, namely, those which are characterized by accord, and those which are marked by discord and conflict.

Parental Accord. When a father and mother are in accord, they are daily laying down four foundations for wholesome Christian personality in their children.

The first is the foundation for emotional security. By emotional security is meant that safe, strong, exhilarating feeling which one has when he knows he is genuinely loved and respected, is safe from danger, is on good terms with the people surrounding him, is able to have the necessities of life, and can co-operate with others on equal footing in doing things worth doing. The foundations for that feeling of emotional security are being laid when parents are in accord; for when accord exists between husband and wife, that fact itself

is ordinarily an outgrowth of deep and unbroken affection between them. A child senses that fact day by day. Love between his father and mother is just one of the things he takes for granted, and never questions. If any event turns his thought in that direction, he does not longer dwell on the matter any more than he wastes time wondering whether the ground will split open and swallow him. He knows that his parents love each other and love their children, and will continue to do so as long as life lasts. Things feel steady for that child. He is not fearful, each day, that his world will go to pieces tomorrow.

The second is the foundation for purposes which one can pursue with zest. For the chief values and goals of life are the same in husband and wife when there is full accord. To be sure, there will always be minor divergencies in tastes and interests, but the main aspirations and ideals of both parents are the same. It is natural for a child to take these into himself like the air he breathes. It is natural for him to form purposes of his own, and let himself go in quest of them, in an atmosphere which is alive already with the feel of going somewhere.

The third is the foundation for a stable moral code of living. When there is accord, the moral code of behavior is very similar in husband and wife, and may be more or less identical. Then when any issue between right and wrong is being confronted, a child finds the same judgment being expressed, no matter to which parent he turns for counsel.

And the fourth is the foundation for co-operation rather than conflict as a method of winning one's way.

In a home characterized by accord, a child begins to learn the art of reaching his own goals by the technique of co-operation rather than by that of conflict.

In so far as these qualities are built into human personality in early life, it is little wonder that the human products do not frequent the world's clinics and hospitals. From such sources, in large part, come the men and women who are doing the world's work. You have many of them in your groups at church, and you are fortunate in being able to build your Christian teaching upon such family foundations.

Parental Conflict. When the relations between husband and wife are characterized chiefly by conflict and discord, the children of such a family are placed in a situation which tends toward unwholesome results. To some degree, great or small, the personalities of the children are likely to be affected by the tension and disagreement.

One of the most hurtful results is emotional insecurity in the children. A child feels the tension, and may reflect it in his own anxiety and fear, or in conflicts in his own affections and loyalties.[2]

Children in a home where parental aspirations and ideals are in conflict frequently adopt one set of ideals, goals, and interests; and believe that they have rejected the other set of contrasted attitudes toward life. Yet it is often found that these two competing sets of attitudes continue to be in conflict within that child as he grows older. It is as if the conflict between the two parents

[2] Compare Bassett, C., *Mental Hygiene in the Community*, p. 163. The Macmillan Company, 1934.

were being reproduced later in the mind of the one child. Not infrequently these children, when older, find their way to clinics for the mentally ill, victims of parental conflict of ideals.

But we are not to suppose that difficulties arising out of parental discord are always postponed until a child is grown. Nervous instability and behavior problems are very common in children from homes where there is conflict between parents. "Clinical studies of the nervous, mental, and behavior difficulties of children have revealed that a large proportion of these conditions are due in part to a conscious or unconscious perception of the strained, antagonistic, and unstable relations between parents."[3]

Broken Families. A broken family is one from which either parent is removed for any causes. Death and divorce are among the most common causes, but here we consider only the latter.

The effects of divorce upon the personalities of children from homes broken by this cause, constitute a problem of great magnitude in modern life, due to the rapid increase in the divorce rate, and to the apparently growing popular acceptance of divorce as a "solution" for marriage difficulties.

It is not possible to determine how largely divorce contributes to delinquency and other forms of social failure in children, although often there seems to be a direct relation. Nor is it possible to know what permanent hurt from this cause is carried over into adult life, though

[3] Bassett, C., *Mental Hygiene in the Community*, p. 163. The Macmillan Company.

one can feel certain that some of these scars will heal very slowly.

But one can frequently see and must always be prepared to discover the keen suffering of a child who loves both parents and must be deprived of one; or the corrosion of being taught to distrust a father or mother; or the social handicap which a child believes he suffers, whether or not his world does actually penalize him.[4]

Parent-child Relations

The relations between parents and their children probably have more to do with the forming of children's personalities than any other factor.

Wholesome Relations between parents and child should furnish a child with the materials with which to meet some of his great emotional needs. Sayles has pointed out four of these.[5]

First and probably most fundamental is his need of security. Born into a world that is utterly beyond his power to cope with alone, he must rely on someone else to care for every necessity. Love from both his parents is a first condition of his security.

By the side of the need for security through parental affection, Sayles suggests there is a second need—that of freedom to grow. Parental love can be exceedingly unwise, leading as it often does to domination. A child may, indeed, eventually throw off this domination; but

[4] Compare Groves, E. R., *The American Family,* pp. 268-9. Lippincott, 1934.

[5] Sayles, Mary B., *The Problem Child at Home,* p. 5f. Commonwealth Fund, 1928.

even if he succeeds in doing so, he may still be characterized by other marks of immaturity which he can never erase. Freedom to grow means that, step by step and as rapidly as is safe, a child is encouraged at home to make his own decisions, and within reasonable limits to abide by the consequences.

The same author speaks of a third emotional need of a child, that is, a concrete ideal to grow toward, embodied in the parents. Most children seem spontaneously to take their parents as the first model for living. No ideal that is painted in glowing words for a child, no exhortations or admonitions, can equal in influence the daily living of those parents.

The fourth need of a child, as Sayles points out after much experience with children, is real companionship with parents. Through this companionship a child has a "safety valve" for his own emotions, finds interpreters of life, and guides to help him find his way.

Unwholesome Relations. Where relationships with parents do not meet such emotional needs of a child as have just been mentioned, there usually are unwholesome results in the personality of the child. Frequently the church-school teacher will encounter these effects in the form of personality and behavior which are baffling until their source is understood. But when it is seen that the difficulties are indications of some deeper condition, both teacher and child may be saved from the futile and exhausting effort to change surface symptoms without changing underlying causes or motives.

Suppose that a child in the church situation comes from a home where parental affection is lacking. The

child may be anxious and fearful. Not infrequently he will engage in behavior which draws all possible attention to himself; for if one lacks normal affection at home, there is some satisfaction in getting the center of the stage by any possible means. Now and then a child from this background will cause numerous problems by taking things which belong to others, as if to make up in some obscure way for the emotional rights which have been denied him. And he has a most limited body of experience with which to interpret the Christian teaching that God the Father is love, since parental love as he knows it is so meager.

Some form of exaggerated or distorted parental love is perhaps more common than lack of love from father or mother. In the home there may be a parent who, disappointed in his or her own adult love life, turns to shower the child with extravagant but unintelligent love, and with excessive devotion. What the church teacher may see as a result is a small tyrant. Every effort to curb him sets off the fireworks of a tantrum; or perhaps the child demands petting, praise, and indulgence, as the price of co-operation.

With exaggerated love there is often a desire to dominate the emotional life of a child, so that a parent is jealous of the normal affection which a child might give to relatives or friends. Perhaps a child, failing to grow under such a regime, is seen by the teacher as a person unable to make decisions for himself, turning back parent-ward when he should be standing on his own feet, unable to move out into the realm of wholesome social relationships with people beyond his family.

From homes where there is no concrete ideal to grow toward come many human tragedies whose beginnings can be discerned in childhood. There are the parents who are seen, even by their own children, to be no characters to pattern after; so that a child must turn beyond the walls of home far too early with his deepest admirations and loyalties. One boy from such a home remarked, "The thing I most wanted when I was very young was a father I could be proud of and talk to the other boys about."

Again, there are parents who are disappointed in their own ambitions, and who project their own unrealized ideals on to their children. The child from such a home will often carry a feeling of guilt if he does not accept his parents' purposes that he should follow this or that career; or will have a feeling of unbearable frustration and desire to escape if he tries to reach goals which he never chose for himself. And perhaps most damaging of all are the complacent parents whose children have never yet seen them abandon themselves with zest or passion in any cause or calling. There are areas in which very few eminent persons have been born, and here may lie one of the causes. Whole regions may stagnate in self-satisfaction, where no child could catch the fires of any high ambition.

When a child is denied companionship with parents, one of two general recourses are open. He may learn to find in his own inner world a sufficiency which will enable him to depend less on others, or he may turn to persons outside the home to find the birthright which he should have first found at his own hearth. In either

case the Christian teacher has unusual opportunity; on the one hand to help a child furnish his inner world more richly, and on the other hand to help him find the companionships which do not destroy but, rather, build up life.

Relations With Other Children

A child's relations with younger brothers or sisters are likely to have very significant results in his development. Emotionally, there may be a feeling of welcome as the younger members of the family are born; or there may be jealousy over being displaced; or dread that the family is to be larger still.

In character development there are endless possibilities. But on the whole an older child is likely to form habits of throwing off on the younger members of the family, or of co-operating with and for them. In the latter type of habits, a sense of responsibility is helped to grow, and some of the qualities most needed in one's bearing toward the younger and weaker are cultivated in the finest possible setting.

The younger children in turn respond to what they find in the older, whether antagonisms or co-operation, and are deeply influenced by it.

Thus both in a child's emotional life and in his character development, the relations with other children in his family are not only vastly important for their own sake to the persons immediately concerned, but also the way is paved toward or away from Christian living in the true spirit of brotherhood as the circle broadens to take in more and more people.

Other Family Influences

The development of a child's personality in the family is influenced by many other factors. We mention here a few which the church-school teacher needs to take into account.

The order of birth probably plays a part in the formation of personality; as when one is an oldest child, or a youngest child, and so on. But evidently the results of a certain position in the birth order are not the same in every family. Neither statistics nor experimental evidence warrants us in believing that any specific effects on personality always follow when a child comes in any certain position in the birth order. Hence the teacher will be guarded against supposing that an oldest child, or a youngest child, or a middle child, is certainly going to be thus-and-so just because of that fact.

The only child often suffers in popular estimation because folk assume he must be "spoiled" and difficult to get along with. Experimental evidence offers very little support to this idea. A slightly larger proportion of fads in food and spells of temper has been reported from one study, but other studies indicate no deviation from normal personality, and, indeed, show fewer "only" children who were rated as nervous. In habits of work they rated ahead of others, and were quite as good mixers.

Here also the church-school teacher owes it to children not to assume that any particular traits of personality will be found in a child because he is an only child.

Family status and circumstances very early lay their

mark on children. The standards of living, the mental outlook, the vocational choices, and the later achievement of individuals, all seem to be affected, and to some extent governed, by the social and economic "class" to which one belongs.

Family traits are frequently evident in a child. This is similar to the resemblance to particular adults, mentioned earlier; but it is a broader matter, for it takes in traits which characterize whole family groups. This becomes manifest at a very early age. Mary M. Shirley reports a thorough study of 25 babies during the first two years of life. She says: "Each baby manifested some traits that were in keeping with or similar to those shown by parents or siblings [children of the same parents]. Strong family resemblances appeared in physical traits and in appearance. Resemblances in personality traits were not less striking. In gait, activity, or speech, in intellectual interests or social behavior, and sometimes in all these, the examiners saw family traits crop out. Family characteristics were the more obvious because the examiners were able to observe more than twenty families at once, but neighbors, friends, and relatives also commented on these resemblances."[6]

Orphans and Dependent Children

Many church groups contain children who have lost one or both parents, and children from foster homes or orphanages.

A child bereft of either parent but living at home fre-

[6] Shirley, M. M., *The First Two Years,* Vol. III, p. 207. University of Minnesota Press, 1933. Reprinted by permission.

quently makes a wholesome character gain by assuming some share of a parent's responsibilities which must be distributed as far as possible among surviving members of the family. But at the same time there may be heavy costs in personal development, due to the lack of normal affection from a mother or father. Reasonable and consistent discipline is difficult to maintain, and behavior may become erratic. And the foster-parent relation, if it should come to exist, is especially difficult for many children, who may resent the new parent or feel themselves at a great emotional disadvantage as compared with half-brothers or half-sisters.

One plan for reconstructing the behavior of very difficult children is that of placing them in carefully selected foster homes under supervision. The church teacher can serve in the building and rebuilding of some of these lives by co-operating with the foster homes. On every count it is a most Christian thing to aid in every possible way, and not the least important of these ways is by the adding of sincere, trusted Christian friends among adults, to the child's acquaintances in the "normal" world.

Again, some churches will have in their groups children from orphans' homes. These children justly resent any suggestion that they are different from other children. In the better institutions of this type every possible means is taken to make children stand out as individual persons and not as mere impersonal atoms within a mass.

But even at the best that can be done, there still is often a protest against being deprived of parents and

home. A superintendent of a state agency received a letter containing these lines:

> I would like to know where I was born and how old I was when I was put on the state, and what for did my father and mother die, or what was the matter. Have I any brothers or sisters in the world or any friends? . . . Please write and tell me how things are as soon as possible, please.[7]

A woman who worked in an orphans' home tells of being permitted to read the diary of a girl in the home, which repeatedly expressed the longing for a mother who would be all that a mother should be.

The teacher confronts this deep desire in these children, in their hunger for affection and their longing to be treated as an individual person. No finer service can be rendered them than by giving this affection, wholeheartedly but without partiality or too much sentimental petting.

Surroundings

Physical surroundings also have their effect upon the development of personality. No one can be sure he identifies all the differences between children of city, town, or country; but each environment writes itself into the personality of a child.

It may be too that important differences are produced by the geographical area in which one grows up, whether East or West, North or South; and by his constant sight of plains or mountains, lakes or sea, as his lot may be.

[7] U. S. Department of Labor, Children's Bureau Publication No. 166, 1926.

The effects of broadened contacts through travel are being felt by an increasing number of children who tour with their parents in automobiles, and rub elbows intimately with more of their world than their grandparents even saw.

Moral surroundings, likewise, in neighborhood and community, insensibly creep in upon each child. A neighborhood is not neutral toward religion. A child senses respect or disrespect for Sunday, for great Christian days, for Christ, and for the deepest loyalties of men and women; whether from the "leading persons" of the community, its business men, its laborers, or its ne'er-do-wells.[8]

Economic surroundings and conditions, as we all are only too well aware, have taken a terrific toll of children. I. N. Kugelmass recently said that six million children have already been scarred in the economic depression. The newborn are feeble, the children are stunted, and the adolescents more sophisticated. The problems of the adults are reflected in the anxieties of the young. The children are worried over the family income, with all the changes and deprivations which result. The family often has to crowd into one room, or even the same bed. Protracted dependence, irritability, and thwarting, lead toward rebelliousness, sullenness, complaints, and antisocial activities.[9]

It is a grim picture, but whose conscience binds him more than the Christian's should, to see it as it is, to do

[8] Compare Cole, S. G., *Character and Christian Education,* p. 165. Cokesbury Press, 1936.

[9] *Scientific Monthly,* July, 1936, p. 74f.

all in his power as a citizen to prevent its recurrence; and as a teacher to be very understanding before all the symptoms of degradation that never should have been? He may do much to rebuild in these children a justifiable trust in the kindness of men and in the goodness of the Father in Heaven.

Religious Influences at Home

When a child begins attending church school, he brings with him, from his home experience, the raw materials for his first understanding of the Christian religion. We have already suggested how this is so, but let us now make it more explicit.

The relations between his parents and between parents and child, furnish him the background of experience with which to begin to understand the love of God the Father, and have bred in him either the elements of serene confidence in his universe, because thus far he has found it dependable; or contrasted attitudes of fear and distrust, or indifference.

Likewise in his parents the child has seen, or failed to see, some concrete embodiment of what it means to be a Christian in the most intimate relations of life. He has been led some distance toward a sense of his own responsibility for choices, or kept too closely tied to apron strings; thus encouraging or discouraging a conscience of his own. He has found, or has lacked, dependable parental guidance in the tangled world which he confronts. In all such matters, when the foundations are secure, the building of Christian personality and character can be helped forward rapidly by the Christian

teacher. But when they are insecure or need rebuilding, the task is immensely difficult.

Specific religious ideas and words with which to express them may or may not be in a child's possession, for homes vary greatly in the degree to which parents give specific religious instruction.

Consider, for example, how children differ in their awareness of God when they first come to the church. It appears that a child's first awareness of God comes out of very early experiences in which feeling and emotion, in his adults, are the chief characteristics of the situation as far as the child is concerned. For some children these first experiences connected with the Divine Being are ones in which the word "God" is heard only in moments of anger or disappointment. It may well be that a child growing up under such circumstances has little or no awareness of God in the sense commonly meant among religious people. His ideas of God have to be reconstructed.

Other children in surroundings of a prevailingly different kind, get their first associations with the thought of God in varying ways. But in a family where there is a body of personal relationships which are truly Christian in spirit and act, and where God is spoken of with reverence and addressed in prayer, foundations are being laid for the very kind of teaching which the church wishes to carry on.

The Child Is Reacting

We have considered numerous factors in the environment which may influence a child's development. There

is a risk that hasty thinking will lead to the selection of one of these and the making of broad generalizations based on it. For example, one is often tempted to conclude, "This child is from a fine Christian home, therefore he is bound to turn out all right;" or, "A child from that background is certainly headed for delinquency and crime."

Two facts, if kept steadily in mind, may help to prevent such risks in thinking about children. One is, that *all* the factors in a child's background are intertwined in their influence, so that no one of them may be regarded as if it stood alone in its effect upon a child. Like the ingredients in a complicated recipe, they all work together to produce one distinctive combination. It is true to say that no two children ever have the same environment.

The other is the fact that the child himself is reacting to these influences in his own unique way, selecting and accepting some, avoiding and rejecting others; and all the while building up a Self altogether unlike any other. We must never forget that a child is *active within his environment and reacting upon it,* helping in turn to make or even to remake that environment. So, while we of necessity begin by thinking of his home and surroundings, it is equally essential that we think of these children of our groups, as helping to make those homes and surroundings what they may become.

Suggestions for Discussion

1. Members of the group may be able to recall instances

in which they have corrected a first estimate of a child after knowing his home and surroundings.

2. Briefly consider some of the more significant instances of children in your group whose growing personality is being influenced by aunts or uncles, grandparents, or other adults besides parents.

3. Recall instances in your observation, of children who seem to have been notably influenced either by accord and co-operation, or by discord and conflict, between the father and mother.

4. Take the four emotional needs of a child as suggested by Sayles, and consider whether they seem to be met in the case of one or more actual children, suppressing names if desired.

5. Can members of the group give instances showing the effect of the relationships between children of the same family, upon one or more of those children?

6. Help the group to see how faulty many common generalizations about oldest child, youngest child, and only child are; as, for example, by having the group name supposed traits and then show that they know of exceptions.

7. If members of the group are teaching orphan or dependent children, bring out clearly the especial needs of these children, which a Christian teacher might help to meet.

8. Let the group show what, if any, factors in physical, moral, social, or economic surroundings are especially influential in the children they teach.

9. In discussing the religious influences upon children in the family, help the group to see the importance of the unspoken religion of a family.

"My Friend"

1. The first part of the written account of "your friend" should include a description of his home and surroundings. As far as you feel it is appropriate to do so, you might use

the topical headings of this chapter as a general outline for this part of the paper, beginning with "Adults in His Family," then "His Parents," and so on.

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CHAPTER III

HOW CHILDREN DIFFER

THE Dionne quintuplets have come into everybody's home through advertisement and story. These five little girls not only have the same parents and birthday, but also have as nearly the same environment as is likely ever to surround children. Yet how different they are! Signs of individuality began to appear from their earliest days.

If it is so with these children from one home and one birth, how much more so with the children of any one group in a church! There are wide differences between them in every respect. After considering the influence of family background in a child's development, it is well to have attention called to several of the more important ways in which children differ from one another, so that we may the better appreciate the uniqueness of each individual child.

THE BODY

Physique. To begin with, children differ notably in their bodies. This is most readily apparent in certain actual physical characteristics. They differ, for example, in size, in coloring of eyes, hair, and skin; and in form and proportion. As a result of the total impression, we call one child graceful or pleasing, while another is certain to have names attached which carry the idea of the

ugly duckling. To a very large extent the rôle which a child must carry in his world is based on the total impression which he creates as a result of his physical appearance.

Again, there are inward physical differences, less apparent, but no less important. A child's strength and endurance, or his lack of it, are important factors in determining how much part he is able to take in group activity. A heart too large or too small, or some gland which does not function normally, may react upon his whole outlook. His resistance to disease may increase his confidence, where another child's lack of it may lead him to become a nurse for himself and expect others to help in protecting him.

Health. Children vary in the degree to which they are handicapped by some one or more forms of ill health. About eighteen out of every twenty-five children enrolled in our public schools are handicapped by some physical defect or form of ill health. About half the school children have enough defects of teeth to interfere seriously with health. About half either are, or have been, infected with tuberculosis. About fifteen per cent suffer from some serious form of malnutrition, while about the same percentage have obstructed breathing because of adenoids or enlarged tonsils. There are numerous other defects, appearing in smaller proportions, such as defective vision or hearing, spinal curvature, organic heart disease, or predisposition to some form of nervous disorder.

Since these conditions exist so generally, it may never be taken for granted that children in a church school are

in perfect health or physical condition. The actual facts may not even be known to parents, since studies made for the White House Conference showed that a high percentage of children had had no health examination of any kind. Accordingly, in case of any significant behavior difficulty or manifestation of unwelcome personality tendencies, it may become important for a church teacher to find out from a child's parents what is known regarding his physical condition. In communities where slight attention is paid to such aspects of life, it may often be necessary for a teacher in the church to take the lead in getting a child under adequate medical care.

Mental Capacities

In mental capacities there are wide differences between individual children.

Sensory Capacities. Some children have much greater range and nicety of discrimination than others do, in reference to colors, sounds, tastes, and so on. When a child has difficulty in appreciation of pictures or music, one basic reason may lie here.

Imagery. There is much variety in the way children form mental images. Some individuals need to see a thing in order to understand and remember it well, while others depend more on hearing. It is possible to test this in a simple way by asking a child to describe the dining table as he left it the last time. One may observe whether his description shows a predominance of images from things tasted, or seen, or touched;[1] and perhaps

[1] Betts, G. H., *The Mind and Its Education,* 3d ed., p. 121. D. Appleton-Century Co., 1923.

will get valuable hints as to the kind of ideas most effective in presenting a matter to a particular child.

Intelligence. There are many kinds of intelligence. The I.Q., or "intelligence quotient," is a figure secured by dividing a child's mental age by his chronological age. It is intended to furnish a rating of one's "general intelligence" or "brightness." An I.Q. of 90 to 109 is regarded as "normal," 80 to 89 as "dull or backward," 110 to 119 as "superior," 120 to 139 as "very superior," and 140 upward as "near genius or genius." In any large number of children taken at random, approximately twenty per cent will be superior or above in intelligence, about the same percentage will be dull or below in rating, while the remainder will be normal. In a small group these figures will seldom hold true, yet even there one or two children frequently stand out because of superior or inferior intelligence.

But as a matter of fact the figures for a child's I.Q. tell us very little of what we need to know about his abilities, because the I.Q. is really a measure of many specific mental capacities. Two children may have the same I.Q., and yet be very different in their capacity for comprehending words, or for remembering, or reasoning, or following directions.

And there are still other kinds of intelligence which are not measured by the I.Q. at all. For example, Ellis suggests that there are at least three other kinds of intelligence.[2] There is a "mechanical intelligence," or the ability to manipulate things rather than ideas. There

[2] Ellis, R. S., *The Psychology of Individual Differences,* p. 62f. D. Appleton-Century Co., 1928.

is "social intelligence," or the ability to understand and deal with people. Again there is "artistic intelligence," the ability to appreciate or create beauty, as in music, painting, or literature. It has been suggested that there may also be a "moral intelligence," but the evidence for this as a distinct capacity is doubtful.

Differing abilities in all these lines are evident in any church group, and probably furnish the basis for important differences in children's responsiveness to religion, as we shall point out below.

Personality

Types of Personality. Many psychologists have tried to find an accurate way of classifying individuals into types. The most influential effort of this kind is that of C. G. Jung. His own book on the subject[8] is quite difficult to read, so that many garbled versions of his meaning have been passed around from second-hand interpretations of it. For that reason it is well to examine his position briefly.

Jung distinguishes two general attitudes toward life, which he calls extraversion and introversion. The extravert is the person whose interest and attention are given chiefly and most readily to what goes on outside of oneself, especially in his immediate environment. The introvert is the person whose interest and attention are devoted most naturally to what goes on in the inner world, especially the world of thinking and feeling. President Theodore Roosevelt may be taken as an ex-

[8] Jung, C. G., *Psychological Types.* Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc., 1926.

ample of the extravert, while Gandhi is apparently an instance of an introvert.

Two very common misunderstandings of the meaning of Jung's terms should be pointed out. One is the notion that "extravert" is a term of praise, while "introvert" is often a word with which to censure a person. This is not Jung's intention in the least. He uses the words to describe, and in no sense to evaluate individuals. The other misunderstanding lies in the kindred notion that the extravert is of more value to society than the introvert. This probably arises out of our respect for "men of action," but it fails to take into account the immeasurably great service rendered to the world by "men of ideas," poets, and philosophers.

Early Differences in Personality. Important differences in personality begin to be manifest very early in life. Professor Arnold Gesell, after careful studies in the Yale Clinic of Child Development, reports that many "traits of behavior individuality" in children of five had been observed within the first sixteen weeks of an infant's life. In some children, social responsiveness, communicativeness, and adaptivity were recognized even earlier.[4]

Another study conducted with great care,[5] reports that personality differences were apparent at birth, and that each baby manifested "a characteristic pattern of personality traits," which showed little change with age.

[4] Gesell, A., and Ames, Louise B., in *Scientific Monthly,* September, 1937, p. 225.

[5] Shirley, Mary M., *The First Two Years,* Vol. 3. University of Minnesota Press, 1933; see especially Chap. VII.

Still other scientific studies of very young children yield the same kind of findings, and seem to indicate inborn differences in personality.

The Significance of Differences in Personality. We do not yet have satisfactory names for the various kinds of personality and perhaps we shall never have, because the combination of characteristics in each individual is unique. The newer names like introvert or extravert; or the more familiar names like shy and timid, or aggressive, friendly, and kindly, will be given individuals to sum up qualities of personality which stand out so plainly that they impress every acquaintance.

But more important than a name for these facts is the meaning of them. We have been told by some psychologists that all the traits of an individual's personality are learned. Evidence does not seem to bear this out. In any case, whether native or learned, they appear very early in life, and persist at least into childhood with much consistency. A church-school teacher, whose time with an individual child is limited at best, must often accept a child as he is in the matter of personality traits.

The counsel of practical wisdom under such circumstances is, *whenever possible, build on to personality traits which already exist.* Use ingenuity in finding ways to harness traits of personality so that children may be helped to grow toward desired goals by the use of desirable traits, rather than by trying directly to change undesirable ones.

An instance of what is meant occurred in a certain Junior Department. Jane was timid, a little hard to make friends with, perhaps an "introvert"; but found

it easy to express ideas through speech or writing. Frank was friendly, interested in doing much more than in the difference between two ideas. The children were planning a dramatization to portray home life in Biblical times. Miss Wilson found a way to help Jane be chosen leader of the group preparing the lines to be spoken. Interest in this undertaking brought Jane "out of herself" into more natural association with other children in the department than had been evident before. Frank took the part of a Hebrew father and his interest in this rôle led him to a better understanding of the place a father took in Hebrew life. Each of the two children was led into a bit of desired growth by building the teaching on to already existing characteristics of personality. It is important to observe that in neither case were the characteristics of the personality changed. They were turned in a different direction.

Boys and Girls

Mental Ability. Intelligence tests do not reveal any significant differences between boys and girls in "general intelligence." In one study, for example, nearly a thousand boys and girls were examined with four different intelligence tests, and the difference between the median (average) for each test with the boys and that with the girls, was negligible.

Differences do seem to exist, however, when boys and girls are compared with respect to more specific kinds of mental ability. Freeman, summarizing the results of a large number of studies, says there are five specific kinds of differences between boys and girls.

The first is a slight but consistent superiority of girls over boys in general linguistic ability. Practically all investigators report girls beginning speech earlier than boys, using first words appropriately earlier than boys, excelling in the extent of vocabulary, length of sentence, and completeness of structure of sentences.

In numerous tests which involve the use of numbers, there seems to be a slight difference in favor of boys. This appears in such matters as arithmetical and mathematical studies.

In memory, girls show a consistent superiority over boys, beginning in the preschool period and extending to the college age.

On the whole, boys surpass girls in manual performance and in mechanical ability.

The amount and variety of information are not mental traits, strictly speaking, but there seem to be significant differences between boys and girls in this respect. Young boys are reported as surpassing young girls in knowledge of things not ordinarily found in the immediate environment, whereas girls are reported excelling boys in knowledge of particular objects in the immediate environment.[6]

Personality Differences. It seems generally agreed that there are typical differences between boys and girls in personality. One way of summing this up is by saying that boys are ordinarily more aggressive than girls. In one study, for example, the following problems were reported as occurring at least twice as frequently in boys

[6] Freeman, F. S., *Individual Differences,* Chap. VI. Henry Holt and Company, 1934.

as in girls: truancy, destruction of property, stealing, interrupting, overactivity, disobedience, defiance, cruelty and bullying, rudeness, meddlesomeness, and acting smart. A very significant problem for the teacher is raised by this aggressiveness, and we shall return to it in Chapter IX.

The Things That People Expect of Boys or Girls produce important differences between the sexes. These must be taken account of, in teaching, for we wish to appeal to a child, wherever possible, through what he already values. Thus, it will frequently be found that the favorite games of boys are so different from those favored by girls as to make common participation impossible. There may be important differences in the types of adventure sought, and the ways of seeking it. Situations offering protection and security from a girl's point of view may be markedly different from those appealing to a boy, and vice versa. The recognition desired in his world by a boy and that sought by a girl may be poles apart. The types of persons most admired or disliked, similarly, may have little in common.

Does this mean that boys and girls should be separated in the church school for purposes of teaching? The answer depends upon the results which we are chiefly concerned to gain. If we wish to perpetuate the idea of a "man's world" and a "woman's world," we shall wish to separate them. Further, we shall find it easier in some respects to separate them, because many appealing experiences outside the church are more practical to secure with boys in one group and girls in another.

However, it is in place to remember that the essential elements of Christianity appeal to human nature, and not simply to male and female. Further, in religion, as in the other most important areas of life, richness of experience, breadth of view, penetration of thought, and sympathetic insight require that each sex shall learn from and along with the other.

Balancing the advantages in each course of procedure, it seems wiser, wherever possible, to keep boys and girls together. This is ordinarily done in public-school work, and there are added reasons for it in the church.

Background of Experience

The differences between individuals thus far considered, are chiefly due to variations in native equipment. But in addition, the immense differences in environmental influences immediately begin to operate, so that the widely varying experiences of each child make him increasingly different from any other child.

We have already referred to the background of home and surroundings, in Chapter II. Here we need only to add that in consequence of the great differences between individual homes, each child brings to the church an equipment of early experience so unlike that of the neighbor child, that it is as if each one had come on Sunday from a different planet.

Add to this the further differences produced by schools attended through the week. Children from nursery school or kindergarten bring an experience of adjustment to other children their own age and to adults outside their family, which naturally cannot be so with

those who have remained at home. On the other hand, the latter, because of more constant association with parents, bring such riches or poverty of emotional experience as that intimacy may have bred.

As school attendance continues into the grades, the child's world enlarges, with correspondingly greater difference between individuals. Besides the knowledge gained and points of view achieved in all other respects, the church teacher begins to reap the gains or to feel the disadvantages of the attitudes toward school which are formed in each child. Further, the type of school attended may make very important differences. It is frequently observed that a child attending day school of the traditional, formal kind, needs much more stimulation, if he is to be creative, than is the case with a child attending a more "progressive" school.

And the general world in which each child moves outside of home, school, and church, produces its share of yet greater differences. The play group with its code of behavior begins to be felt in discussions of issues in character building. The points of view held by adult associates of a child's parents begin to be in evidence when children discuss standards and values in living. The movies open up some realms wholesomely for a child, but often the church literally has "movie-made children" to deal with, prematurely sophisticated in some areas while being blinded gradually in others. And a child's reading or lack of it still further marks off each mental domain from every other.

So the list grows, with hardly any end to it. But doubtless enough has been said to suggest how complex

the differences in background of experience are. And when this is seen piled on top of the differences in native equipment, the incredibly great variations in the crystallization of snowflakes will seem simple in comparison.

Responsiveness to Religion

When such differences exist between individual children in their native equipment and their background of experience, no two children will or can respond identically to any bit of teaching in religion, or have the same kind of experience of religion.

We lay our plans in all good faith, trying to use the guide materials that are available. But that is as far as our distant helpers in teaching can go with us, for when we begin actually to teach we are "on our own." The "come back" may be entirely different from anything we had expected, and this in turn may be due to these differences between individuals.

Kinds of Objectives. Observe some of the ways in which your effort to reach objectives will meet with varying response, because of these differences.

Suppose a unit with Beginners is devoted to the cultivation of appreciation of God's care and love as seen in nature. To some little children birds, flowers, and animals are already becoming an open book, and appreciation grows readily. To others nature may be an unfamiliar realm, not often seen from their apartment house or tenement, and then so jealously guarded by crusty officers as to leave the impression that beasts and blooms are more highly valued in our world than people

are. The responses cannot be the same in all children, but often a unit can help to "make up" for a child what he is missing in his daily life. But the approach then must be different, since these children need familiarity as a first step toward appreciation.

Let us say you have a unit with Primaries with stress on making friends. One child whose physical appearance is attractive, finds it easy to respond in discussion and to be friendly; while another whose appearance is otherwise, may be hungry for friendship, yet will wear a mask of tart response to all overtures. Or if there are children in the group who tend toward introversion, a teacher might easily overlook the fact that they can discuss friendliness with some skill, but that being friendly comes hard; while the more extravertive children might actually be achieving friendly relations with a wide range of people, and yet be unskillful in discussing it. "Making friends" is a very different matter to each child in your group.

With your Juniors, perhaps you are working in a unit largely devoted to honesty. Some of the children, with high rating in "general intelligence," are interested in the difference between an honest act and a dishonest one in various situations, and make clear-cut discriminations; but others seem quite unable to make the finer distinctions. Some are able actually to do the honest thing, without great apparent difficulty; but others are repeatedly involved in situations where the code of the play group, and even the adults, is so different from that of the church as to land them in constant struggles between right and wrong, and with victory not always for the

right. These children do not hear "honesty" with the same ears.

Kinds of Intelligence. Or consider differences in religious responsiveness, which grow out of the kinds of intelligence which characterize a particular child.

In proportion as a child has a high rating in general intelligence, we may expect that he will show increasing ability to deal with the ideas of religion. The theological content of the teaching "goes home," is remembered, and often a child seems to be putting his theology into a system, after the fashion of many adults. But not so with all. Some show no interest; others seem to understand, but rapidly forget; while still others seem unable to fit two ideas together and make a larger one.

With good "social intelligence" a child often seems to learn the Christian way of living with people, without difficulty. But a child may be in the class which Buehler calls the "socially blind," paying no attention to other people, disregarding their feelings, concerned only with his own toys or plans or play. This is seen even in infants, and seems not to be eradicated in all adults!

When a child has good "mechanical intelligence," he may be far more at home in manual construction than in discussion, while, vice versa, some children are always at ease socially or at their best in discussion, but are at a loss in handling any physical materials.

Or how shall a child respond to the beauty of the Bible, to the masterpieces of art, and to the mysterious wonders of God's world, if he lacks "artistic intelligence"? Does this account for "lack of appreciation" in some whom we seem unable to reach with the appeal of beauty?

Background for Awareness of God. Consider, further, how the background of experience in various children prepares them to respond differently to your effort to lead them into increasing awareness of God.

Much of the body of symbols with which we try to help children become aware of God is drawn from nature, and appropriately so, for the Bible has very much of nature in it. But one's ability to see God through nature obviously depends greatly on his experience with nature. A city child is shut away from the very nearness to and immediate dependence upon it which helped the Hebrews to see Him there so readily. Without a background of experience with nature somewhere in a group professing to learn of God through nature, the business of trying to teach through nature reeks of museums and artificial conditions. Contrariwise, the teacher living in country or smaller towns has an immense advantage in the greater familiarity of the children with nature as it really is.

But children are helped to become aware of God through human relations better than through nature. Many of the greatest symbols for God are drawn from this area of human experience. Yet the varied background of children's experience here must be known by the teacher, unless, indeed, he remains satisfied to have them be mere parrots to say words they have heard about God. God is King; but what does "king" mean to a modern child now that abdications are so familiar? God is Father; but how shall we use that sublime imagery with children who know a new "father" every few years? Or if they keep one father, what when we dis-

cover that the children count him among the chief objects of their fears, as many children do? God is love; but how can we so present God until we know what love means in a child's ears, since he may know it as smothering possession, querulous demand, or some other distortion?

God is best revealed through Jesus Christ. But how shall we reach any sure ground in so teaching individual children until we know something of the results in his mind after pictures seen, stories read, tales told, and even oaths heard?

Religious Experience

Children differ also in the way they actually experience religion. You can see differences of a notable kind in your adult friends; and are there not similar differences in children? For example, there are persons to whom religious experience is never satisfactory unless it is an intellectual experience. They are concerned to know all that can be known about the Christian faith, and they eagerly speculate in matters where all knowledge ceases. It is very important to them to get a truth expressed clearly, and they are distressed if a statement of belief seems open to serious challenge.

For others, religious experience involves much more of feeling and emotion. It is very important to them to be happy in their religion. Not to "feel right" about their Christian experience is to them a sign of danger, while peace or the more joyous states are taken as the surest signs of divine favor. Again, for others, the aesthetic element in religious experience bulks very

large. The enjoyment of beauty in any form lifts them, as little else can, into a sense of God's presence. And there are yet others who find the reality of God best disclosed to them in living, doing, seeking to accomplish the will of God.

Where there are differences of this or any other important kinds in the religious experience of children, that fact opens two great opportunities to the Christian teacher. One is to help a child to experience God more richly still through those doors into his being which open most readily to God. The other is to help him, as far as may be, to know God better in ways which he might miss.

What Then?

Such matters as we have considered must be translated into terms of the children of your own group before they have any lasting value. As you become more intimately acquainted with them, you discover, in one word, how utterly unique each individual is. Then you are better prepared to help them learn.

The first reaction, perhaps, is to ask, "How is it possible ever to teach them in group?" There is little need to linger over that question. We must because circumstances demand it; but even if that were not so, we still should be so obligated because the Christian religion is as truly social as it is individual.

But in the present line of thought the chief consequence is obvious. The teaching of the Christian religion is never complete without individual attention to each pupil. Only when we know the main outlines of a

child's native equipment and at least the high points in his background of experience, can we do the most effective guiding of his experience toward the goals chosen for our teaching.

Suggestions for Discussion

1. Since this chapter contains terms which may not be familiar to each member of the group, make sure that each new term introduced for the first time in this course is understood by all the group.

2. Can members of the group tell of instances where the church teacher's work is importantly affected by the physique or health of a child? After describing instances briefly, consider what a teacher should do to meet the situation.

3. Let the discussion bring out clearly, (a) the effect on children's groups and the bearing on the teacher's work, when one or more children in a group are superior or above in intelligence, or dull or below in intelligence; and (b) the importance of differences in "mechanical intelligence," "social intelligence," and "artistic intelligence" in a group of children in the church.

4. Secure from the group, if possible, a few brief but vivid illustrations of different types of personality in children, and ways in which these differences affect a teacher's work.

5. Let the discussion clarify similarities and differences between boys and girls in personality, as this group actually knows them. What do the differences mean for teaching?

6. Let the group name a few day schools attended by children whom they teach in the church; then consider whether there seem to be any uniform differences in the children from these various schools.

7. Devote especial attention to (a) securing concrete examples of differences in children in their responsiveness

to religion and in their actual religious experience; (b) to clarifying the meaning of these differences, for the teacher of those children.

"My Friend"

2. Your understanding of "your friend" would probably be deepened if you should write a description of "his individuality." This might contain reference to his physique and health, his mental capacity, his "type of personality," any distinctive qualities which seem associated with the fact that your friend is a boy or a girl as the case may be; the effect of his day school upon his development; and the particular ways in which he is most responsive to religion.

Other Reading

Campbell, C. M., *Human Personality and the Environment,* Chapter IV. Macmillan, 1934.
Freeman, F. S., *Individual Differences.* Holt, 1934.
Powell, W. E., *The Growth of Christian Personality,* Chapter IV. Bethany Press, 1929.

CHAPTER IV

VALUES AND AVERSIONS

HAVE you ever run to catch a street car which was already moving? You remember how you had to look for something to take hold of, so that you might swing aboard?

It's a bit like that in understanding children so that you may more effectively teach them. They come to your group, already "going," and you must look for places where you can "catch hold." The place to take hold is through a child's *values*. Once you gain entry there, then, to change the figure, it is as if you had been invited to help the helmsman steer the ship.

VALUES AND INTERESTS

In examining this matter of a child's values, we must first think of a child's original nature.

The Drives. There are native urges or drives in us, moving us to seek certain goals without our having to be taught to do so. Unfortunately, psychologists have not yet agreed how to name these deepest moving forces in human nature. Few call them "human instincts" any more, so we had best avoid that term. But there are other words for them, which are different on the surface, but really have the same meaning at bottom.

Professor William McDougall calls them "instinctive propensities," and lists eighteen basic kinds of human

striving, such as: to seek and perhaps to store food, which is a "food-seeking propensity"; to explore strange places and things, or the curiosity propensity; to remain in company with others and, if isolated, to seek that company, or the gregarious propensity; to cry aloud when efforts are utterly baffled, or the appeal propensity; to acquire, possess, and defend whatever is found useful or otherwise attractive, or the acquisitive propensity; to wander to new scenes, or the migratory propensity; and so on.[1]

W. I. Thomas gives the name of "wishes" to these deepest moving forces within human nature. He suggests that there are four great wishes—for security, for adventure or new experience, for recognition, and for response.

The Values. When any native drive or urge is operative within us, we feel that the objective for which we are thus striving has great worth and importance. If we think of the "food-seeking propensity," Esau is a familiar example. Coming in from the chase, ravenously hungry, food seemed the most important thing in the world just then. It was easy to resign later position and prestige ("recognition"), for the sake of the chief value of the moment—a bowl of savory pottage.

If we think in terms of Thomas's "wish for new experience," a boy's values in that respect may be seen in his attitude toward stories of adventure, his liking for the "Hairbreadth-Harry" type of movie, his frequent desire to run away, his willingness to risk encounters

[1] McDougall, William, *The Energies of Men,* Chap. VIII. Charles Scribner's Sons, 1932.

with authorities in school and state for sake of a thrilling venture; and so on.

The Interests. When one is in quest of some value, the feeling he has toward that value, or toward the activity of any kind by which he pursues it, is "interest," or "an interest." Esau, just in from the hunt, had an interest in food which, for the moment, outweighed all others, making them null and void until he had eaten his fill. A boy, aquiver over a tree-house he is building, has an interest in carpentering which you would give much to harness at home or school!

In the Church. Are there values and interests in the field of religion and the church, which naturally arouse the feeling of worth and importance about them within a child? There are, in great variety. Any one of them may not appeal to every child at every given moment, but on the whole the Christian Church offers to children, from the hour of their first contact with its school, a rich array of stimuli to a child's native values and interests. Let us use Thomas's list once more, because it is conveniently concise.

New Experience. Little Jim may be helped at home to look forward to his first day at church school as an adventure; and it is a far greater one than he can then realize. He is to make new ventures in more rewarding relations with other people, at home and abroad, and thus will begin his part in the Christian's unending quest for brotherhood. Unless he is very introvertive and socially blind, the enlarging friendships appeal to him.

And many of his new experiences will be vicarious, that is, they will be had in the person of others. He is

initiated into acquaintance with brave souls of every age and place who have gone forth seeking God and being found of Him. Day by day the story is unfolded, until he has companied at least a little with prophet and apostle, ancient and modern, and begins to feel at home with names and deeds in the great Church Universal.

Recognition and Response. In the church he is recognized from the beginning as an individual. Some religious bodies teach him that as a baptized infant he is actually a member of the church. Others seek through Christian nurture to bring him into membership. But whatever the custom in his own church in that regard, he has come into one of the few societies where every person has place, regardless of age.

Within reasonable limits he gets the same kind of response to his own individuality which he should have at home, and often far more than he actually has there. His preferences are considered; his opinions listened to with courtesy.

He has come within one little segment of the Church, which is meant to be a universal circle of people and yet a circle where each individual has immeasurable worth. He is becoming a part of the Church Catholic (universal), which is greater than any age or race. And in so far as genuine respect for personality characterizes his own church and teacher, his whole being goes out in answer, with the feeling, "This is good." The teacher's opportunity at this point has already been discussed in Chapter I.

Security. From the day he enters he is helped to have an "at-home feeling." Care is taken in nursery and

Kindergarten, that it shall be so. Soon he is hearing of and feeling the church as another kind of home. Emotional security in the new situation is built up; meanwhile he is learning its terms of speech and its customs, which adds to his feeling of security there.

The Universe Answers His Needs. But we should be very blind if we saw the Christian religion and Church as offering values and interests to a child only within a church building at stated hours. For one chief point in all we are doing with children is to help them have the emotional realization that the very universe itself offers us the values which we natively desire, and does it on a limitless scale.

The wish for recognition and response is met by the teaching, from his earliest contact with the church until he faces the sunset, that wherever he may go or whatever he may be, the Father loves him, seeks him, hears him, cares for him, and wishes to help him meet the hardest places with courage.

He is helped to see that a person of any age, child or man, may be secure in such a universe. This must not be a blind security, without due regard for God's natural laws and their consequences. But he may be brought to realize that "This is my Father's world;" and that the discovering and keeping of the deepest laws of living bring growth, enriching life for himself and all with whom he lives. "Faith" and "trust" are the religious terms for his attitude when he lets himself go in response to this realization; "redeemed life" is the way we adults characterize the result.

And he gradually comes to see, if his teaching is

dynamic, that the true Christian never reaches an end in his pursuit of these values in God, or his deepening understanding of them; so that new experience with these greatest values is itself held before him as one of the supreme values. His teachers, drilled in educational terminology, will be speaking of "activities that lead on," and his minister, talking in theological terms, may call it "growth in grace," but they alike are seeking to lead him further into the abundant life.

Change in Values and Interests

We have just been suggesting, though we did not directly say it, that a child's values and interests change as he grows. That commonplace fact is one of our chief keys for understanding both the educational process and the meaning of the Christian religion in children's experience.

Particular Values. A "particular value" is a value which an individual happens to hold at a certain time. The particular values which one first strives for, and the interests which he first has, are largely determined by the environment in which he is situated. For example, if we consider that it is natural for persons to have an "acquisitive propensity," the kind of things which he acquires and treasures will depend greatly, at least in earlier life, on the place where he lives and what surrounds him. A farmer boy may want a herd of cattle for his own, while a mechanic's son may begin early to collect his own set of tools.

Subject to Change Without Notice. But the particular values which an individual seeks are subject to

change, and you may not even discover that fact about a friend until you are startled into knowledge of some new interest of his.

For instance, when you chance first to know a boy, he may be greatly interested in stones which he gathers and hoards, until his room is lined with shelves like a museum. Presently he drops that interest and turns to bugs, or pennants. A few years afterward you may hear that he has amassed an unusual collection of girls' handkerchiefs. In adulthood his interest turns to money, it may be. He preens himself not too subtly on his bank account and his investments, growing steadily. A drop in the market upsets him so that he looks like a man facing the end of the world. But he survives; and as many men do, passes beyond the money-hoarding stage. Fine rugs, rare pictures, first editions, or whatever else he counts the true "art," begin to adorn his house until it must be rebuilt to show them to the best advantage. And as a kind of final stage, in some religions, the man may become concerned most of all with storing up good deeds or merit in some form. But from boyhood to the end, his "acquisitive propensity" was not long inactive.

As the chief values and interests, whatever they may be, change in an individual, a wholly new repertoire of activity is drawn forth. It may be the same old "drive," but is turned toward a new end, and accompanied by the arousal of some new interest.

Christianity and Change of Value

We have been saying that a child's values and interests change as he becomes older. Unless guidance is

introduced into experience, this change of values is subject to chance and accident, and may end in disappointment, or even disaster. In Christian education, however, there is the opportunity to guide the change of values, so that persons shall find constantly increasing value in the relation with God as revealed through Christ, and in Christian relationships with one another. Let us examine certain phases of this opportunity, connect it with some familiar Christian terms, and look at some of the questions that arise.

The Gradual Change of Values. In children who early come under Christian teaching and influence the change of values is ordinarily a slow and gradual one. Often it is so undramatic that one is likely to miss the significance of step after step that is being made.

For example, such children begin to love and trust God the Father, in infancy or early childhood. One could not say when the beginning was made, but through Christian home and church, they have quietly taken that first great step of the religious life in as matter-of-fact a way as they take for granted the presence and the love of the father and mother in the household.

They begin to grow from partial and faulty insights into the meaning of the Christian religion, into fuller ones; as is true for many children who become increasingly familiar with the life and character of our Lord, so that He is not a mere name to them, but a Person whom they know and love.

Such a child's values should be constantly growing. Old values may take on new meanings; as when a child passes from rote prayer which another has put on his

lips, to genuine, personal prayer which is the beginning of communion with God. New values are discovered for the first time; as with some children who have had everything done for them, but are initiated into the experience of being trusted with some responsibility, and bubble over with the exhilaration of actually carrying it out successfully; or as when a selfish child begins to know what it means to share genuinely with others.

As insights deepen and loyalties enlarge, a child often decides that certain habits are out of keeping with the new Self he is coming to be, and may abandon the old habits, forming new ones in their place.

But observe again that such changes, and scores of others like them, are very slow. Frequently such a child, when he is older, cannot identify any one time when he made a wholesale turning-about from one set of values to another which was radically different. Life has been, rather, a succession of smaller-scale turnings. But this is not the case with all, for in some persons there is:

A Sudden Shift of Values. Have you ever looked fixedly at a black-and-white pattern of cubes which appear to be arranged in one fashion, and then have you discovered that the pattern suddenly shifted, so that the arrangement of the cubes looked entirely different?

Something a little like that occurs in some individuals, who experience a very rapid, but deep and far-reaching change of values. Life as they have been looking at it suddenly takes on a radically different aspect. Objects toward which they have been indifferent or antagonistic, are seen now to be full of charm. Courses of action which they have disliked or even detested, now are

eagerly sought. And it happens so rapidly, in some instances, that the person can tell you the very hour when it took place.

Which Is Characteristic of Childhood? Of these two kinds of changes which may take place in one's values the gradual change is much more characteristic of childhood, provided there is adequate guidance of their experience by maturer Christians. A sudden and deep-seated change of values is not very likely to take place in the religious experience of children. If it occurs at all on this rapid and dramatic fashion, it will probably be after childhood has passed.[2]

The bearing of this upon the work of the Christian teacher is twofold. First, this slow, undramatic, gradual change in values is the normal kind of change in children when they grow up in Christian homes and churches. And second, if the Christian teacher uses well his opportunities to lead children constantly further into the Christian values, the need for a later and sudden change of values is reduced by that much; because the children are already learning to accept and live by those very values in childhood.

God and Man. As the mature Christian observes these changes of values, interests, and habits taking place—whether gradually or suddenly—and as he ponders the meaning of these things, he feels two strong convictions about them.

One is that God must surely be at work in these lives. On no other basis does it seem possible to express the

[2] Clark, E. T., *The Psychology of Religious Awakening.* The Macmillan Company, 1929.

meaning of what is taking place. Joyce Kilmer, thinking of the marvel of a tree that is growing, pointed his poem by crying, "Only God can make a tree." And how much more must we say "Only God can," when the growth is that of a human personality becoming truly Christian! "God gives the increase," as Paul put it. That conviction has, for ages, been voiced by the Christian thinker. So the minister, or the theologian, speaks often of regeneration, as an act of God's Spirit bringing into being new inward life, "a new creature."

But right by the side of that conviction is another, equally strong, regarding human responsibility. At times this is directed in strongest language toward the individual who should make changes. The writers of Scripture often urge upon men that it is their duty and their privilege to turn from lower to higher values. This turning is often spoken of as conversion, the act by which the human spirit turns toward God and the distinctively Christian values. In some cases it will be a complete about-face. In other cases it will be act after act of changing from lesser, to richer, more rewarding, and more distinctively Christian values and loyalties.

At other times there is an almost overpowering sense of our human responsibility for persons whom we might turn from lesser to richer loyalties and values. In those hours, without forgetting that only God can give the increase, we know beyond all argument that we must do planting and watering—the patient, day-by-day work of our teaching.

Public Committal. Whether the changes of value are gradual or sudden, there is need for public committal of

oneself to Jesus Christ as Saviour and Master of life. That much seems universally accepted in Christian churches. The questions that perplex us relate chiefly to the age at which the step is appropriate, and the experiences that are expected or required prior to it.

The meaning of this public committal varies so greatly in the denominations and in individual churches that it is impossible to bring out here the rich body of ideas and experiences associated with it in any particular congregation. But the following are fruitful questions to ask regarding the practice of any particular congregation, especially as that practice affects children:

1. Are children approached individually or en masse with the proposal that they make public committal? If en masse, are the dangers of suggestion and pressure fully avoided?

2. When children voluntarily raise the question of making public committal, and are regarded as too young, are they dealt with so as not to make them feel rejected by the group of which they wish to be in every sense a part?

3. When children have grown up under Christian nurture, are they helped to understand the significance of that Christian experience which they already have, as well as of those experiences which it is hoped they will have?

4. When children have had Christian nurture of a careless or limited kind, is care taken to go thoroughly with them into the meaning of what they are doing?

5. Is there instruction for children in the meaning of becoming a member of the church? If so, is the teach-

ing put in terms which children can comprehend and experience?

6. Is stress laid on the necessity for continued growth in the understanding of the Christian religion, and growth in the relationships with God and man, after public committal; or does public committal tend to be regarded as an end point on the Christian journey?

Aversions

One lives by his values and lives for them, but there is quite another side to this matter. A child has his aversions just as truly as he has his values.

An aversion is the opposite of a value or an interest. There are activities and objects which, one feels, are distasteful, repellant, or hateful. Instead of welcoming the mental or physical activity, or feeling oneself drawn toward the object, there is an aversion, that is, a turning away accompanied by a strong feeling of revulsion. One dreads it and avoids it if possible; or if he must engage in the activity or have contact with the object, he does so with more or less of loathing and disgust.

Barriers to Religious Development. When some object or activity which is important, and perhaps essential, in the Christian religion becomes an aversion in a child, the growth which is desirable at that point is at least interfered with, and may be effectually checked.

It is not uncommon to discover in children a pronounced aversion to the church school. Parents may report that a child comes only after strong insistence at home; and when he arrives, he refuses to participate in anything which is going on.

Aversions can become associated with prayer. One woman has stated that certain words which her father used in saying grace at the table became so entwined with the idea of returning thanks at meals that she is never able to dissociate the two. Even now there are severe limits to her possibilities of gratitude over food.

Now and then aversion is felt toward the Bible. Parents occasionally tell of children who have a definite antagonism to the Bible, vigorously protesting against hearing its stories at home, and showing evident signs of rebellion against them in the church.

And there are instances where aversion is distinctly felt toward Jesus or God. Not infrequently one hears of a child who grows so tired hearing of either that he breaks out in some form of protest.

In short, nothing in heaven or earth is immune from becoming an object of aversion to some individual.

Aversions Arise Out of Experience. Aversions are not inborn, but arise out of an individual's experience. In general, this is experience of a decidedly unpleasant kind, which afterward colors the thought of some activity or object associated with the unpleasant episode.

Aversions May Change. It is possible for aversions to be changed. In honesty, however, we must recognize that it is very difficult to change an aversion, for its origin was emotional and not rational; and emotional states will seldom yield afterward to reasoning. Indeed, as one labors to change some deep-laid aversion in a child, he may come into a new understanding of Paul's frequent remark to the Corinthian folk and others, that it had been necessary to "reconcile" them; for the word

means to "change thoroughly," or to "change throughout." Little wonder that he felt the need of God in such a process.

Generally speaking, aversions are not reasoned away, but may be dispelled by other emotional states. This principle has been recognized under many different names. The psychologist may speak of "unconditioning a fear by means of a satisfying experience with the feared object," and he verifies the principle in the laboratory. But in experimental religion the same principle has long been known; Thomas Chalmers gave a fine statement of it in the very title of a famous sermon on "The Expulsive Power of a New Affection," and centuries before that, Saint John wrote that "perfect love casteth out fear."

Good Teaching Changes Values

We have seen that both values and aversions may change. This has led us, you see, to the topic of "children's learning," for "learning" is a word which denotes the changes that take place in persons.

When we are considering the subject of learning, you will observe that we do not speak *directly* about children learning values and aversions. The reason for this is that a child's valuing attitude toward what we are teaching tends to grow if he has emotionally satisfying experience with it; but if he has emotionally unsatisfying experience with it, he is very likely to form an aversion toward it.

Accordingly, will you seek to keep this general statement in view as you examine the topic of learning in the

next two chapters: When a Christian teacher works with his group of children in harmony with the principles of learning, he is indirectly but most effectively guiding the growth of Christian values in children's lives; and when his teaching violates those principles of learning, the very values which the teacher and the Church hold dearest may become objects of aversion to children.

For that reason, the wisest teachers are concerned about both content and method. Content is primary, and attention to method at the expense of content is like going through the motions of eating when no food is on the table. But devotion to content with disregard of method is about the surest way to turn children against that content.

And methods of teaching, in turn, are built upon the principles of learning.

Suggestions for Discussion

1. In order to have a basis for the discussions, be sure that the group understands the three terms "drives," "values," and "interests"; and that they understand the relation between these in a child's experience.

2. Let the discussion bring out clearly, but briefly, some typical experiences in the church which appeal to a little child's native values and interests.

3. The group will probably find the topic "Change in Values and Interests" much more vivid if a few instances are given from their own observation, to illustrate these changes as they take place in a few children over a period of several years.

4. As one of the central points in the discussion, secure similar illustrations to show the change of values in the Christian experience of actual children.

5. Does the group agree, from their own observation, that the gradual rather than the sudden change of values and interests in religious experience, is typical of children?

6. Does the group find in this discussion opportunity for full recognition of their personal convictions regarding both the divine and the human factors in the Christian growth of a child?

7. It may be helpful to consider one or more actual churches, asking the questions suggested in this chapter regarding the practice of that church in the matter of children and public committal to Christ.

8. In considering the topic of aversions, give opportunity for description of aversions actually encountered in children, and ways in which these have been changed. If the group feels they do not have sufficient insight into ways by which aversions may be changed, make it clear that the next two chapters bear upon this subject; and carry the problem into those periods in search of fuller clarification of the question.

"My Friend"

3. Your understanding of "your friend" would be carried still further if you should include a section on "his values and interests." Be alert for indication of his distinctively religious interests and values, but do not be in too great haste to concentrate attention on that aspect, because you probably will be better able to help there, if you first see as fully as possible his other values and interests which you can take hold of, as a foundation for growth.

4. Has there been public committal? If he is a Kindergarten or Primary child, your church probably considers him too young; nevertheless, his purpose may now be forming. If he is a Junior and has not yet talked this over with someone, you might have an excellent opportunity to prepare the way for this step, in the near future.

Other Reading

Beaven, A. W., *The Local Church,* pp. 61-68. Abingdon Press, 1937.

Clark, E. T., *The Psychology of Religious Awakening,* Chapters III, V. Macmillan, 1929.

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CHAPTER V

CHILDREN'S LEARNING

Kinds of Learning

Children are forming new habits, and changing some which they already have. As a Christian teacher you are concerned in this whole process, for much of your work goes into the effort to secure Christian conduct, and this in turn leads you into the guidance of habit formation. You will wish, then, to examine *the learning of new responses,* with especial attention to the making and altering of habits.

Children are acquiring a great amount of information as they grow. In this too you are deeply interested, for there is a special body of knowledge with which you wish your children to become increasingly familiar as Christians. You will wish, therefore, to consider the *learning of new information,* giving especial thought to memory, since what is learned may be either remembered or forgotten.

A child frequently finds himself confronting some problem, perhaps confused by conditions which he does not understand, or searching for meanings which he has not yet grasped. You wish the whole matter to be lighted up by a flash of understanding like that which makes a child cry out, "Now I see it!" Accordingly, you will want to give attention to *learning by new insight.* Indeed, without this insight, much other learning which

you desire will not take place, while some which does is very unprofitable.

In this chapter we are to consider especially the learning of new responses, and the other two kinds of learning mentioned will be treated in the next chapter. In later chapters we shall examine still other aspects of learning, in other connections.

Readiness and Mind Set

"I'm tired of hearing about Jesus!" announced Derek to the Primary superintendent and the children of his group. "That's all we've talked about for weeks and weeks! Just things about Jesus! I wish I didn't ever have to hear about Him again! Aren't there other things we could talk about?"[1]

The leader had her plans for that day. Perhaps she wished to guide Derek and the others toward new habits of living, based on Jesus' example and teaching. But the moment she uttered the word "Jesus" that morning, she set off a signal telling her that Derek, at least, was not ready to learn what she wished to teach. Later we shall see how she met the situation.

In psychology it is often said that when the human organism is ready to respond, the response is satisfying; but if it is not, to respond is annoying. This is sometimes referred to as the principle of readiness.

This readiness, or the unreadiness which is its opposite, is frequently due to inward, physical factors. If a child is tired or sleepy, we may fail to get responses

[1] Waite, Helen E., in *International Journal of Religious Education*, XII (October, 1935), p. 13.

which we could secure from the same child under more favorable circumstances. If he is hungry, he is ready for food, but probably not for any of the other things we had hoped to accomplish just then.

Readiness or unreadiness may also be due to previous experience. For example, when Junior children are given the opportunity to divide into interest groups or committees, an outsider could not predict accurately whether in a given department boys and girls would go together because of common interest, or whether boys would be together in some groups and girls together in others because of common sex. In the first case previous experience in school or elsewhere when sex lines were disregarded would probably be the governing factor. In the latter case previous experience in congregating with one's own sex would probably govern, and in that event, it is difficult to get boys or girls "ready" to work naturally with each other.

Conditions quite similar to those denoted by the words "readiness" and "unreadiness" are also frequently mentioned under the term "mind-set." These "mind-sets" have arisen out of previous experiences. Some of them have been outside the church school, and are thus beyond the control of the teacher, while others have been within the church setting.

As children grow older and begin to associate with persons beyond the family, there is contact with much that sets the mind against religious teaching. Jibes about being "good," jests about "Sunday school," profanity in the use of divine names, digs at the clergy in movie portrayals, characterizations of Christian women

as prudes and Christian men as meddlesome bores—all such burlesques of Christianity from flippant oldsters leave some mark on children who see and hear them.

But, on the contrary, a generally favorable mind-set in children toward a particular teacher's leadership is very frequent. Children whose experiences with that teacher have, on the whole, been satisfying, come with an inward preparedness for what the teacher may suggest, which predisposes them to accept it in good spirit, and try to carry it out.

"Mind-set" is found in groups as well as in individuals. It is common to hear that children "like" a given teacher so much that "he can do anything with them." And, of course, the opposite is sometimes true as well, so much so that a group may "get out of hand," and have to be given a new teacher. And there are many other kinds of group mind-sets which are evident in school.

Thus, at the beginning of any particular piece of teaching, one will keep in mind that all the previous experiences of those children, as a group and as individuals, in the church and beyond it, come in the door with the pupils on Sunday, to help make or mar the teaching of that day.

Satisfaction and Annoyance

New responses are more likely to grow into habit if accompanied or followed by satisfaction, and they are less likely so to grow if accompanied or followed by annoyance.

Three kinds of satisfaction are of especial significance to the teacher because they tend to help the learning of new responses. Each has its general opposite, which

tends to make it less likely that a new response will be habitually repeated.

Approval and Blame. One of these is the satisfaction which comes with social approval as expressed by some form of praise or commendation. Its opposite is the annoyance resulting from being blamed, criticized, or ignored.

The attitude of the teacher toward the new response he is trying to encourage is thus very important. If he commends a child for a helpful act; if he welcomes an attempt to do things for oneself; if he encourages a child, who had been backward about participating in discussion, to express an opinion—whatever the habit he wishes to build, if he shows approval for the effort, he encourages the child to repeat it.

But a teacher can discourage a child by a critical attitude, by finding fault with him, by making light of his efforts, or by humiliating him in any way. After any such experience, a child's attitude toward that teacher is very likely to harden. At the next encounter he is a little more ready for conflict, a little less ready for cooperation.

The attitude of the other children in the group is often an even more important factor than the attitude of the teacher, when a new response is being made. One teacher was trying to have the children pass quietly from their room to the chapel of the church. The children took turns in leading. Philip, a leader on a certain day, was boisterous on the way. Afterward, the teacher directed discussion to the incident, making opportunity for some of the children to say they would not want

Philip for a leader again. To stop there, though, would be allowing Philip to fail.

The children agreed dependability was needed in a leader. "Well, I'll lead once more, and show you," said Philip. All consented that he should do so, and that this was better than for Philip to decide he would never lead again.[2]

And the attitude of the people whom a child knows outside the church situation is often most important of all. If a child believes that "his world" approves certain honest acts, he will probably desire to do them. But if he believes that acts of an opposite kind are the ones which really win commendation, the church teacher pulls against a powerful social current in trying to form the desired habits.

Success and Failure. Satisfaction arises out of success in an attempt, and is an inward reward of a peculiarly effective kind.

For example, the teacher of children wishes them to do for themselves wherever possible, yet frequently prevents this development by hurrying in to do for a child what he should be given time to do for himself, and would find great satisfaction in completing.

Ronald, in church Kindergarten, was trying to hang a picture on the wall with a push pin. Miss Arnold could have done it for him in an instant, but wisely she let him work at it for himself. He fumbled with the pin, not quite understanding its purpose.

"Push it through the picture and stick it in the wall,"

[2] Sweet, H. F., and Fahs, S. L., *Exploring Religion With Eight Year Olds*, p. 11. Henry Holt and Company, Inc., 1930.

said Miss Arnold; but Ronald's hands were left to do it. He took fully five minutes, stooping, grunting, tearing the picture a little and soiling it—but at last he had it hung. Then he straightened up, and surveyed his work with a pride like that of an adult contemplating his masterpiece. It had brought him a sense of success in an achievement.

But look at the other side. Some who know the public schools best tell us that the lives of a great number of children are being poisoned because, being given tasks too difficult for them, they are fed constantly on a sense of failure. Surely, it ought not to be so in the church. The gospel of recovery and of power as adults know it may be translated into children's lives, in part, by setting them to undertakings within their ability, and helping them to know success. The story of Philip, above, shows how a child's potential failure was very quickly redeemed and turned into the promise, at least, of success.

Understanding the Goal. A satisfaction comes with understanding the goal or purpose of an activity, which may induce one to disregard discomfort and even actual pain, and persist in a response. This fact has been repeatedly shown in experiments with animals, and any adult can recall instances of the same principle at work in human life.

In school this principle is put to operation through sharing with the children as fully as possible the purposes of the school work, and through encouraging them to participate wherever possible in the decisions made as to what is to be done.

Exercise

If a new response is to grow into a habit, we ordinarily wish a child to practice the act. Fumbling and awkward the first time, the child will often improve in his performance as he repeats the act. Ronald could hang another picture more quickly the next time, and the following day he played the rôle of an expert, helping Ann to hang hers.

Children require practice in many acts appropriate to the church-school routine—as, for example, in finding Scripture passages or hymns in work with Juniors; disposing of wraps, handling play and work materials, and so on.

Similarly, they need practice in many of the acts appropriate to the Christian life. To pray often, not just in superficial sentence prayers, but genuinely from the heart, so that prayer is not a strange and unaccustomed performance; to execute the ritual acts in a church which uses a liturgy; to give with regularity to causes beyond oneself; to sing hymns until words and music are familiar; to listen attentively while another person is speaking—these and scores of others are habits which enter the fabric of the Christian's life, and usually call for practice if they are to become established habits.

But the mere fact of practice does not guarantee that an act will grow into a habit. Practice of an act without any interest in it, or without understanding of its meaning and purpose, often not only fails to form a habit, but even sets up a strong dislike for the thing being done. A puzzled father once said to me, "I just can't understand

why my sons never go to church now when they are grown, because I sure made 'em go when they were boys." Perhaps the reason is here. There may have been no genuine freedom to choose.

And there are occasions when a response that has become a habit is abandoned for the sake of a better one. Kuo's experiments showed that this may be true even of animals; in maze running they forsook paths that had been run most often and most frequently, and chose different routes which led them more directly to their goal.

Should not the same kind of thing happen on the higher plane of moral and spiritual living? Are not prophets always seeking to have us abandon old paths for better ones? And should not children be encouraged to find far better ways of reaching the Christian goals than we have yet discovered?

Professor Wheeler, commenting on this aspect of learning, says, "The very essence of learning is not repeating the performance, but making a new one," which is a better one.[3] If we can keep this point of view in trying to teach children to live as Christians, we might go far toward changing the static morality which now devastates our world, and creating a more dynamic one instead.

Activity

If learning is to take place, the child must be active; or, as it is frequently put, he must engage in self-activity.

An acquaintance has told me of a day when he sat, as

[3] Wheeler, H. W., and Perkins, F. T., *Principles of Mental Development*, p. 351. Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1932.

a boy, in the pastor's catechumen class, very fidgety of body and very far away in spirit from the words the minister was saying. At last the good man broke out, "George, how on earth do you expect me to pour water into a jug, when the jug is jumping?" In that conception of learning lies a common misunderstanding. The very seriousness of our beliefs, and our enthusiasm for what we live by, make us wish to get children still long enough that we may "give the lesson." But it is not the teacher's part to "pour in" knowledge, nor merely to tell children what they "ought to do."

For learning takes place during and as a result of activity, and of the thinking and adjustments which accompany and follow the activity. The activity may be chiefly mental or chiefly physical, or both, but activity there must be. Learning is not an affair in which children are passive. Neglect of this principle produces much of the trouble found in some church schools, while recognition of it often redeems very difficult situations.

Consider an instance which occurred with intermediates, but which equally well illustrates recognition of the principle of activity in work with children. A new teacher went to take a class of boys one Sunday morning after many others had tried and failed in the effort even to control them. A few minutes later he came to the counselor of the department.

"They've gone," he said.

"Who's gone? You mean the class?"

"Yes," he answered. "They went out the window." And it was literally true.

The counselor decided to tackle such a group of boys,

herself, and in earnest. The next Sunday she gathered eight of them, some sullen, others sheepish, all reluctant.

"I want to know what's wrong," she asked. "What do you come to Sunday school for? What kind of teacher do you want?"

"At first," says Rowena Ferguson, who gives the account, "the conversation was slow because all the boys were on their guard, but as they came to feel that the counselor was genuinely interested in changing the situation and not in upbraiding them, they gradually discussed the matter with some freedom. Their reaction was fragmentary, but decisive: 'It's so dumb.' 'We want to do something.' 'He was a flat tire.' 'It's not any fun.'

"From these statements, the counselor built a picture of boredom, cramped quarters, and energy going to waste, and not one of malicious misbehavior."

A more spacious room was provided, then the group was led to participate with the department as a whole in determining what they wished the department to be. Objectives were decided upon: to learn about God, to help others, and to have fun. The first step was to improve their quarters. So, through learning which involved many kinds of activity, there was begun the redemption of "that awful class."[4]

There is little danger that teachers of children will forget the activity of children! What is needed, however, is that activity of an undesirable kind in the church setting should usually be seen as an effort to relieve the

[4] *International Journal of Religious Education*, X (January, 1934), p. 9f.

tension resulting from boredom, or from a steady succession of "Don'ts" and rebukes, or from material which children do not understand. The teacher's task, then, is to change the situation, turning the activity into better channels, thus leading to desired learning.

Incentives

As long as a child engages in an activity which he himself has freely chosen, his output of energy seems limitless. It is good for a teacher to watch children at play, and be reminded how much they are capable of doing.

But the interest of pupils in a school activity, mental or physical, often dies out, even when they have had part in choosing the activity. The teacher then faces the problem of keeping the activity "going."

It may be we should oftener see this fact as a danger signal, indicating that we are transgressing natural laws of learning. But when this is fully recognized, it still remains true that discipline of the self is also a law, both of nature and of religion. Discipline of oneself must be introduced into a personality that is to be worthy, and it should be introduced into the school situation; nor is the church school any exception. Otherwise children may learn through school not to discipline themselves in going on with a task when the new has worn off or the fun faded partly away.

There are various incentives to activity, whose effect is known through experiment, but which need to be looked at from the Christian point of view.

Commendation is an incentive. Hurlock showed that

children who had been praised before the rest of the class for their good work in arithmetic, made the greatest progress in learning during the period covered by the test. Other children were named and reproved before the class; these made less progress. Still other children were simply ignored, and these made scarcely any gain.

We have already referred to the place which approval from a teacher may legitimately have in encouraging a child's learning. It is obvious, however, that there are dangers. A child may grow smug about himself, until he begins thinking, like little Jack Horner, "What a good boy am I." Again he may become greedy for praise; and if he does not secure it in some deserved way, he may thrust himself forward to get it by any means, as through a false humility. Much problem behavior in school comes from children who are *not* praised for expected performance, and therefore find some other way to get attention. There are serious limitations to the use of commendation as an incentive.

Rewards are an incentive. Experiments have shown that rewards, from chocolate bars to the captaincy of a student group, brought improvement in achievement. But in the churches we have already seen enough of rewards and their results, as, for example, in paying children to memorize. Then there is the use of pins as rewards for attendance. Some churches have found that the use of this device created so much disputing and bitterness that any alleged gains from the plan were very dubious.

But aside from any immediate undesirable results, the business of rewards in the church smacks of paying chil-

dren to be good, or to do what we assume has no value in itself to children. It is like saying to them, "Religion is a bitter pill, and we all know it; but here's your sugar to take it with."

Competition and Rivalry often increase the output of activity. When two persons are pitted against each other, the accomplishment may show a gain, but the antagonisms and jealousies aroused may be very damaging. Group competition, as between two halves of a class or school, will often spur activity; yet dismal stories can be told by churches using "Reds and Blues," or athletic contests, or similar schemes, for encouraging attendance. Often there has been loss of good will, because groups pitted against each other have become determined to win at any cost, have used questionable tactics, and have exulted in victory or resented defeat.

Intrinsic Interest is that attitude of mind in which we feel that an object or course of action has worth for its own sake. We are interested not because we shall be paid or praised, nor because we are afraid to do otherwise, nor because we shall win over a rival, nor from any other such motive outside the thing itself, but because it is good for what it is.

And the Christian teacher has constant opportunity to keep the appeal of the activities by which children learn, on this better plane, where the object or action is felt to be good in its own right, because of what it does to the child himself, or to other people, or for the Father in heaven.

If a given activity does not thus appeal to children as having intrinsic worth, one is due to ask himself some

searching questions. What is wrong if I must threaten or bribe to get this done? How can I best start over and do it all on a different level of appeal? Have I misunderstood my religion? Have I misunderstood my children?

To say that all Christian teaching should be kept on this plane is "high doctrine," and doubtless none of us will live at that level constantly in teaching. But in our best moments as teachers for Him, we know we can be content with no less.

The Desire to Be. It is wholly in line to go one step further and say that the finest incentive to the most rewarding activity grows out of one's desire to be a certain kind of person. It arises from one's longing to be like the person or persons whom he most admires. Each of us, children included, seems to carry within himself the mental image of the person he wishes to be. To achieve it, as much as may be in him to do, he will go "through fire and through water."

In earlier childhood, naturally a child's acquaintance with persons is limited, consisting chiefly of individuals whom he has seen. But quickly this range is broadened, and here lies the incomparable service of a generous use of biography in teaching. Through the medium of actual people, living now or in the past, a child is brought to see what life can be at its best. But he sees it not as an abstract discussion of vague virtues. It lives and moves before him in concrete act, through deeds which win his homage.

And the chief of all such service which we can render children, is done through helping them to know Jesus; not the pale, effeminate Jesus of unfortunate paintings,

but the Jesus who was "in all points tempted like as we are," growing up as a boy with a real boy's outlook on life; and as a man, giving Himself to the uttermost in order that love, and not force, might win the hearts of men. If we can win a child's wholehearted admiration for Jesus, we shall have done much toward building in him what the New Testament calls "faith."

Purpose

All that we have said about learning points clearly toward the necessity that children should have opportunity to make their own choices and carry out their own purposes, if they are ever to learn better responses than they now know. *A child must have genuine freedom to choose, if he is to discover better ways of living.* And when he has chosen, we must respect that choice, else we have turned freedom into the kind of farce it is when votes are controlled by pressure or fear.

If Christian parents and teachers believe in democracy as contrasted with other theories of living which have already spread over so large a part of the world, they should see that some of the deepest foundations for democracy are laid by Christian education in home and church, if that education gives genuine freedom to choose.

But once we grant that much and try to practice it, we face another question which must be well answered in living, else we have only created fresh trouble for our children, ourselves, and our world. For freedom to choose *may* mean only the opportunity to run wild both in act and in belief. This kind of "freedom" breeds an

individualism which is little if any better than the sternest regimentation.

The problem, then, for every parent and teacher is this: How may the more mature give genuine freedom to the less mature, and still guide them? Unless we can find a way to do both, we must admit there is no middle ground between dictatorship in home, Church, and State, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, uncontrolled individualism in every sphere.

May it not be that we shall find our answer through shared experience? See how this can be so. Any group with younger and older persons in it faces some problem in thought or living. If any one person forces his solution on the others, that is dictatorship, however nicely disguised; and the tyrant can be either child or adult. If each finds his own solution regardless of the others, that is individualism, often very rugged. But if they join in searching for it together, with an attitude of willingness in each to be changed while finding the solution, *then each person of every age in that group is learning,* undergoing changes, within an atmosphere which now is frequently called shared experience, and which goes by the name of "fellowship" in the New Testament.

This fellowship or experience of genuinely sharing together is a peculiarly rich soil for the wholesome nurture of children, in home or church. In the home it means that parents and children face life together, each helping the other in thought and action, each learning from and through and with the other. All are growing together. In the church it means that children and

teacher kindle one another's interests and purposes, and learn together. We are not bound to suppose that creative teaching requires always following a child's immediate interests and purposes. At times it is desirable to do so, but teaching which stops there is very short-sighted. A child's existing interests and purposes need to be enriched, need to expand and take in what is new to him, else he is little helped by his teaching.

Neither can truly creative teaching be done when a teacher does, thinks, plans, and executes everything for the children. This is training parrots and robots, and calling them "Christians."

But in genuine fellowship or shared experience, teacher and children kindle one another. Children catch the enthusiasms of their maturer friend, and go with him in some quest for richer knowledge, or more Christian ways of living, or deeper insights and appreciation.[5] And the teacher, at his best, is always learning from and with the children. This may be part of the secret of those master teachers of children, who seem eternally childlike in spirit, no matter what the calendar may say about the years they have lived.

Suggestions for Discussion

1. Can the group tell of instances in their own work where "mind-set" in children created a problem for the teacher? Of instances where the "mind-set" was an advantage? Do you know what caused them?

2. Let the group name some of the habits they wish children to develop in the church situation. Ask how we secure

[5] See Smither, Ethel, *Teaching Primaries in the Church School*, p. 73. The Methodist Book Concern, 1930.

"exercise" of these acts in the church school. Inquire whether the practice is carried on by the children with interest and understanding. Then the discussion may be guided so that the group will clearly see many of the ways they, as teachers, can cause either satisfaction or annoyance in the practice of these acts, through approval or blame, through making success or failure possible, and through helping or failing to help children understand the goal of the activities in which they engage.

3. Consider similarly other acts which parents wish to see developed into habits in the home situation.

4. Inquire whether any children's behavior problems known to the group, may be due to neglect of the principle of activity.

5. It is well to be sure that the group understands the kinds of learning which are stimulated by overcommendation, by rewards, and by competition; that they should examine honestly any work being done by the aid of these incentives; and that they see the difference between intrinsic interest and interest created by these other means.

6. The discussion will lead naturally to a consideration of children's motives and purposes in learning. There is excellent opportunity, (a) to compare dictatorial, individualistic, and democratic living in their effect upon personality and purpose; (b) to show similarities between dictatorships in State, family, and Church; and (c) to help the group to see the home situation and the church-school situation, where children and adults are together, as being one of the finest conceivable opportunities for shared experience which will release both children and adults for more enriching living.

"My Friend"

5. Describe the more significant habits of your friend, giving attention to those which you regard as desirable, also to those which you would like to see changed. How might

you use any of the principles mentioned in this chapter, to bring about those changes? Wherever you can, consider the possibilities in "doing things *with* him" (shared experience), as compared with "trying to get him to do things."

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CHAPTER VI

KNOWLEDGE AND INSIGHT

The Child's Quest for Knowledge

A boy of ten came to the room of a friend one evening, and after a few moments asked, "Will God strike you dead with a bolt of lightning if you steal an apple?" He with some friends had stolen apples recently. Another boy had assured him that the Sunday-school teacher said God would strike anybody dead if he stole.[1]

The question was one little step in the boy's search for knowledge. You will recall that the second kind of learning we mentioned was the learning of new information. A child's questions are one of his most important and most natural ways for this getting of new information.

Some questions, of course, are merely a device to secure attention, or at times to divert it; and there may be still other motives. But there remains a substantial core of questions which are children's nets for gathering in the information they most desire just then.

They play a large part in a child's accumulation of knowledge about religious objects and activities. One investigator[2] reports that children's interest in theology, as indicated by the number of questions asked, does not bulk large in the total mass of questions. Probably this

[1] *Christian Education of Children,* Part Two, p. 186. International Council of Religious Education, 1932.

[2] Davis, Edith A., in *Child Development,* III, March, 1932, p. 71.

would vary with a child's background of home and church, but in any case the answers make up a significant part of a child's total of religious knowledge.

For the answers given a child in response to his questions constitute materials with which he does a major part of the building of his religious world. Accordingly, unless a teacher has reason to suppose a child's questions are a screen to hide some other motive, he will take the questions seriously, and seek to give the information requested.

At the very time when this is done, the child may be plunged into a difficulty which you will need to help him meet. Morgan has pointed out that one of a child's major problems is the reconciling of contradictory beliefs.[3] The answers given to his questions may not fit in with what he has been told elsewhere. For that reason the Christian teacher is under especial obligation in two respects when answering a child's questions in religion.

The first is the obligation of honesty. A Junior child asks you, as one did, "How can the Bible story of creation and my science book both be right? They are *different*."[4] Of course they are different. You do not argue that fact with him. But you may go on to show him that there are two wholly different ways of telling the same story, contrasted somewhat like Kilmer's poem "Trees," and a botany-book account of trees. This honesty in admitting facts is also urgently needed in considering differences between denominations, which give rise to many questions from children.

[3] Morgan, J. J. B., *Child Psychology*, p. 424.
[4] *Christian Education of Children*, Part Two, p. 193.

The second obligation is that of helping a child to find the joy of an enlarging belief. A wise and understanding teacher can help to lay foundations, in answer to children's spontaneous questions, which will make it possible for the later expansion of their knowledge to be built into their faith, instead of seeming to tear faith down.

The Lure of Interest

In the last chapter we spoke of interest as an incentive to learning. This is of great significance in the acquirement of new information. When children are still unable to read easily, much of the knowledge element in religious teaching is brought through stories. Children's attitudes of face and body quickly tell when the story grips attention; and if not, they warn the teacher accordingly.

But as children begin to read more easily, use of interest in the reading as a means of expanding their body of knowledge becomes more difficult for a number of reasons. And yet is it not true that the typical church school suffers badly in comparison with the public schools, in the use which we make of children's reading as a means of teaching? Lesson materials for the church must usually be published in brief form, but older children are quite capable of reading books. The teacher may well search for, and treasure, books for children which appeal to their interest and also carry knowledge which will further widen their horizon.

The two ways of acquiring information which we have mentioned, through children's questions and

through their interest in the material for its own sake, are exceedingly important ways of broadening a child's knowledge, but they do not go as far as is desirable. They leave gaps in the information which is acquired, and it is rather generally agreed that a child ultimately needs to know far more than he immediately desires to know.

Since this is not a book on curriculum, we must pass mention of the various ways of presenting written material, and of organizing it into units which will correspond as far as possible to natural ways of learning. It must suffice here to say that whatever plan is used, one major purpose usually is that children may begin to know the Bible and the great beliefs of the Christian faith; and that in proportion as we teach any body of written materials such as the Bible and the formal expression of our religious beliefs, the problem of memory begins to emerge. Under what conditions do children remember or forget, as the case may be? Accordingly, we turn to the question of memory.

The Memory of Children

The memory of children is likely to be different from that of adults in ways which are very significant for the religious teaching of children.

Specific Memories. There is an almost complete loss of the specific memory materials of infancy and early childhood. This can easily be tested in a group of adults, by asking precisely what events or scenes they can recall from an age earlier than four.

What survives from this early period appears to be in

the nature of emotional memories and perhaps unconscious memory of events highly tinged with emotion. Two studies report that among the memories of childhood which survived into adulthood unpleasant memories predominated over pleasant ones.[5]

Ability to Retain. There is a widespread belief that the materials of memory are retained far better if acquired in childhood, than they are if acquired in adulthood. Many careful tests have shown that this is not the case. The ability to retain materials in memory is greater in adulthood than in childhood. The ability to learn, and the ability to retain, appear to increase rather uniformly until early adolescence; and after that to continue to increase, but at a slightly lower rate of increase, until about the age of twenty-five. It remains nearly constant for perhaps twenty years more, and decreases only very slowly after that.

Kind of Materials Retained. It appears that children's minds ordinarily organize the materials of memory in a desultory fashion. Little bits can be brought back from here and there in the past, but things do not hang together in a logical way, as they do for some adults. Memory for objects, scenes, sounds, and movements, seems to develop much earlier than memory for words, ideas, or abstract concepts. A child's memory abounds in concrete images, while an adult will more easily retain verbal content and generalizations which impress him.

The Significance of These Differences. The differ-

[5] Jersild, A. T., *Child Psychology*, p. 228. Prentice-Hall, 1933.

ences between the memory of children and that of adults have some consequences for Christian teaching which should be made clear.

One is that the relationships of adults with children in early life are more important for children's later religious life than the teaching of precisely worded religious beliefs in that early period. The emotional quality in the relationships of parents especially, but also of other adults, appears to survive into adulthood in some form, and to be of profound importance in the later shaping of a child's personality; while the wording and perhaps the ideas of theological beliefs taught in early childhood seem almost certain to be lost.

A second is that there is little, if any, scientific evidence to support the notion that any department of the church contains the persons who are in the "golden age of memory," unless it be the adults. If adults sincerely believe in the memorization of valuable material, let them practice what they preach, for if they genuinely wish to do so, they can memorize and retain better than children. If memorized material has value for its own sake, that is another consideration; but it has little justification if urged on the basis of age alone.

A third is that the religious materials which will be best retained from childhood are the concrete ideas aroused by religion in action, in the past and today; and not the abstract verbal statements of religious conviction which are altogether appropriate in adult theology. The concern of many adults to teach children theology so that it will always be remembered is best carried out with children through showing them, in words and

in acts which children can understand, what that theology does in action, among people. The abstract explanations of the process can come later.

Economy in Learning

Out of a great deal of experimental work on learning there have emerged a number of principles which are useful in teaching. These have to do chiefly with the learning of new information.

Material in its context is learned more effectively than out of its context. Thus, a child will learn the rules of a game more readily while playing the game than if he must memorize them as a "lesson."

Large units. Material organized in relatively large units is learned more effectively than when organized in small units. Thus in memorizing a poem, a hymn, or a passage, if the material is gone over repeatedly as a whole, it is better learned than if each stanza or other small part is taken up separately and learned.

Distributed learning is more effective than concentrated learning. Given a piece of material to be learned, it is better to study it a while each day, than to spend the same amount of time within one day just before the mastery is required.

Rhythm is a help in memorizing. If poetry is recited in a singsong manner, it is more easily learned than if all the rhythm is eliminated. On the other hand, when a child drops into rhythm in repeating material, this may indicate that he does not grasp the significance of what he is memorizing. If he is getting no meaning from the material, we must face the question whether the material

has value to him, especially in light of data on forgetting, cited below.

Reciting helps learning. Saying aloud the material being learned is one form of practice, and much evidence suggests that a child should be encouraged to recite to someone as soon as possible, the material which he is learning.

Overlearning helps permanency of learning. When material has been barely learned, that is, learned just sufficiently to enable one to reproduce it then and there, it tends to be forgotten very rapidly. Indeed, the rate of forgetting is much more rapid immediately after this bare learning, than it is some time later. Thus it has been found that when material had been barely learned, so much of it was forgotten within twenty-four hours that it required two thirds of the original learning time to relearn the material. But if it is overlearned, that is, repeated again and again until it can be readily reproduced, it tends to be retained better.

Reviews favor permanency of learning. Since the rate of forgetting is so rapid at first, obviously it is important either to repeat or to relearn material which one desires to make a permanent possession in memory. Experimental work suggests that the first review should come on the day following the first learning of the material, or, better still, on the same day; that it should be reviewed again two or three days later; again a week or ten days later, and afterward at less frequent intervals.[6]

[6] Summaries of test work on this type of learning may be found in Morgan, *Child Psychology*, p. 294f.; and in Pressey, S. L., *Psychology and the New Education*, p. 373f. Harper & Brothers, 1933.

It is important that we should help a child to enter into the meaning of what he is learning, otherwise we are in danger of stuffing him with dead material. For example, he may connect his enjoyment of flowers and his sight of birds, with his verses about the coming of spring. If a teacher can find no way to associate the memory material with the children's experience, he may well ask whether the children are ready to profit by the learning of this particular bit of material.

A very significant kind of meaning is brought into material being memorized, if it can be used in a social setting. Overlearning and review, for example, can be very boring if children merely recite and recite to get things letter perfect; but if the material can be used repeatedly in worship services, in responses, and so on, it takes on value as part of a larger and shared experience.

Forgetting

Much church-school teaching is done in the belief that if we once get valued material "into the mind" of a child, we have done a meritorious act. We justify our belief by the further assertion so frequently made, that the material will be of value to him in later life.

To a large extent these two beliefs are held in blind faith. Assertions like those mentioned break down completely in many instances for the simple reason that the material is forgotten.

Consider three sets of data which show, from experimental work on learning, conditions under which material is rapidly forgotten.

Bare Learning. We have just shown above, under economy in learning, that material which is barely learned tends to be forgotten very rapidly; and that the rate of forgetting within the first few hours after bare learning is even more rapid than it is afterward.

"Nonsense Material" is a term used in psychology to refer to material which has no meaning whatever to the person learning it, being a succession of syllables which do not "make sense" to the learner. From the psychological point of view, any material which a child is expected to learn falls in this class if that child has no understanding whatever of the meaning of the words. As far as the psychology of a child's memory is concerned, this would be just as true even when the material had rich meaning and great value to the adult who insisted on the memorizing of it.

A brilliant experiment was conducted by Ebbinghaus years ago, on the rate of learning and forgetting. To begin with, he discovered that it required more time to learn nonsense material than it did to learn material which "makes sense" to the one learning it; so that the time cost was greater. Ebbinghaus then constructed his famous "curve of forgetting," showing the rapidity with which nonsense material was forgotten, after being learned to a single correct repetition. More than half of it was forgotten during the first hour, and within a day about two thirds was forgotten. Afterward the curve sloped more gradually, showing a retention of approximately 20 per cent.

General Ideas and Verbatim Statements. Of similar importance to the church teacher, is the comparison be-

tween the rate of forgetting general ideas, as compared with the rate of forgetting verbatim statements. In one test it was shown that statements memorized verbatim were rapidly forgotten; while on the contrary the memory of the general ideas seemed to improve within the first ten days afterward and to decrease scarcely at all during the test period of seventy days.

Contrasts. The following statements serve to contrast the kinds of material which are more readily remembered, and those which are more readily forgotten. They are based on tests, some of which we have already cited.

Material with meaning to the person learning it is better remembered than material which lacks such meaning. Material which is overlearned is remembered better than material which has been barely learned. Material which one learns with the purpose of remembering, is remembered better than material which one merely "goes over." Material learned during social participation is better remembered than material learned during one's solitary activity. General ideas are remembered better than material which must be learned verbatim. And it appears that attitudes remain fixed much longer than items of knowledge.

Learning by New Insight

Insight. We all know what it feels like to confront a baffling situation which we have not met before. We do not know what to make of it all, which way to turn, or what to do. But we also know what it is to feel things clearing up. "*Now* I understand it," we cry; or "This is

the first time I could ever make sense out of *that;*" or, "I've got the hang of it at last."

That experience of grasping or understanding a new situation, even without previous experience in such a situation, is what we mean by "insight." We see and feel things take on meaning. This is of major importance in any teaching; and especially so in religious teaching, where the most familiar words, ideas, and acts carry so rich a meaning that no one can possess those meanings all at once. But until they *begin* to have meaning, they are a cloud of words and strange practices, puzzling at the best, and perhaps very tiresome or even repellent.

A large part of what we have said in connection with learning, up to this place, points toward the importance of insight in learning, for without their insight the learning which we ask of children is literally a senseless affair to them. The learning takes place with difficulty, then rapidly drops out of memory, as if in protest against so stupid a thing as a school where one is expected to be always learning without understanding. We may defend the process as much as we like, but children will forget the results as rapidly as possible. Turn, then, to consider learning by insight.

Insight Helps Achievement. Begin with the actual achievement of children in school or at home. If they are required to engage in any activity which is meaningless to them, the performance of it seems drudgery. Perhaps they have not chosen it themselves; they do not see the purpose; and they go through it if they must, but they escape on any possible pretext.

But compare work done in pursuit of goals which a child understands and accepts as his own! An instance occurred in a certain church. The Juniors were restless, not interested in their materials. Behavior problems were so frequent that at last the workers of the department, in conference, admitted that things were out of hand. But what should be done?

A recent visit to the church by a young Oriental student for the ministry provided the suggestion for a place to start. The children had shown interest during his visit, and responded eagerly now to the suggestion that they should prepare a pageant on Korean life. Behavior problems almost disappeared at the very beginning of the new work. The children gathered information from books, prepared the pageant, and finally presented it before the entire church.

When the Juniors returned to their temporarily abandoned unit of curriculum, they brought to it a new understanding of the place of the Bible in the world's civilization, which they had hitherto lacked, but which they had gained in part through their study of Korea and the influence of Christianity there. The previous type of work was resumed with a different spirit—because of "insight."

Insight Helps Attitudes. A similar change of attitude and motive is often easier to see in an individual child than in a group. Derek, whose story was partly told in Chapter V, is a case in point. After he announced he was "tired of hearing about Jesus," and asked whether there were not other things to talk about, the superintendent replied, "Why, certainly. I am very sorry you

feel that way, Derek, but suppose we try it, and see how it works. Suppose next Sunday we try not to mention Jesus in any way. Just for you."

Derek grinned, but the next week was not an easy one for the superintendent. It was the hardest plan which she had ever tried to prepare, but in the end, she constructed a program in which there would be no reference to Jesus.

At the end of this day's very unusual program, Derek was not grinning. The favorite songs of the children could not be sung, for they were woven around the Name which was not to be repeated. The Lord's Prayer could not be used, neither could their offering song. Even the stories had to be rearranged. At the end of the hour the children had very sober faces.

"The next week the superintendent asked the question: 'What kind of a Sunday did we have last week?' and the answer came from a chastened small boy, 'A forlorn one!—Don't let's ever have another one like it!' "[7]

A skillful teacher had used the problem, felt in Derek's life and created for the whole group, as an occasion for helping the boy—and, indeed, all his group—to understand the extent to which all that we do in the church is built around an awareness of Jesus.

Insight Needed in Moral Problems. But the importance of insight extends very far beyond the conventional classroom setting, important though it is there. A child may confront larger problems, and feel utterly

[7] Waite, in *International Journal of Religious Education,* XII, October, 1935, p. 13.

baffled by them; for, as a certain book title suggests, there are "big problems on little shoulders" as truly as on broader ones.

Take as an example a passage from a book written by three children, and rather typical of some of the religious difficulties with which many children struggle:

> We do not understand why Hitler hates the Jews, because Jesus was a Jew, and the Jews believe in God and say their prayers. . . . After Hitler it will go down the line with Goering and then Goebbels. These people have chosen, so they cannot change now. . . . And look at the way little children are treated in this world. Look at the Russian children who didn't have anywhere to go and slept under the opera house with newspapers around them to keep them warm, and some of them were robbers, but it wasn't their fault because they were hungry. But just the same, someone very good finally gets to these children and takes them in. But it is very sad just the same. Jesus must send these people finally to these children in the world who are walking on the earth all alone and no bread to eat. But we don't understand why Jesus allows this to happen first before the good people finally get these children.[8]

When a child faces such a problem within his own experience, the solution to it is a purely mental one, and yet it often will make all the difference between fear and peace, dread and eager anticipation, antagonism and cooperation, hatred and love, and so on.

Insight During Solitude. Sometimes a child will acquire sudden new insight while he is alone, pondering something which to him is a mystery. If it were pos-

[8] Abbe, Patience, Richard, and John, *Around the World in Eleven Years,* pp. 105-06. Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1936.

sible to have a good collection of records of such insights in children's experience during solitary reflection, we should have one of the richest human documents.

John Knox McLean has described an experience of this kind in his boyhood. He says that he began life as a very little boy, a stranger to all reverence. One day, however, there came "a sudden burst of illumination." He was going with tense nerves through a chestnut forest flooded with sunshine but awesome to him. Surely no evil spirit could come out in such a place, he thought; but only some fair being rich and beautiful would dwell there, and seek some boy whom she might adopt. While such fancies were "prancing" through his brain, suddenly he heard high, clear, mellow notes from the song of the hermit thrush. He looked in every direction, for no bird could make a boy's heart go that way! To his mind the sounds came from none other than a visitor from heaven. From that time onward, the woods to him were full of signs of such visitors. The incident proved a turning point, for a new understanding of nature seemed to open within him and he was no longer "a stranger to all reverence."[9]

Insight During Teaching. When a child shares with us his perplexity over some of the mysteries of living, it is a golden opportunity to share in turn with him, from such insights as we may possess. Comments made to teachers after the lapse of years suggest that this may be some of the most fruitful teaching that is ever done.

Often we too will lack the needed insight; and then

[9] Buckham, J. W., *Christianity and Personality*, pp. 145-47. Round Table Press, 1936.

we may share with a child in his quest for it. In home living especially there is much opportunity for such fellowship with children, on common ground. And there will be times in plenty when we must admit to a child, at home or at church, that we together have come to the edge of both knowledge and insight; and that beyond the point reached we can only wonder. Yet even so, we may help him to see that there are attitudes of confidence and faith in the presence of unsolved mysteries, which make the difference between bitter and sweet in daily living.

Suggestions for Discussion

1. Recall some of the more difficult questions asked by children in home or church, and consider how they might be answered at that child's age, with due regard to the two obligations mentioned in the first section of this chapter.

2. The group may help one another by sharing information regarding interesting books for children, which enlarge a child's knowledge at points where a Christian needs to be informed.

3. Briefly review the statements in the section headed "The Memory of Children." Then take up examples of memory work and evaluate them in light of the facts as stated in that section. If the group questions the accuracy of any statements made in the text, that challenging attitude is to be welcomed if it leads, not to argument based on prejudgments, but to a search for further information.

4. Take the same, or still other examples, of memory work, and evaluate the methods used in teaching the memory work, in view of the principles stated under "Economy in Learning."

5. If possible to do so during the course, have some person or committee study memory work as taught in some of

the churches represented—from two points of view: (a) How well do the children understand the material? Test by asking the children to define some of the words used, and by having them paraphrase some of the material in their own language. Keep an exact record of what is said. And (b) How well do the children remember the material? Test by asking for repetition of material memorized a month, or six months, or a year ago. Both these tests are especially commended to children's workers in churches using catechisms.

6. Take care that the meaning of "insight" is understood. Be sure that the group sees the significance of children's insight in connection with their attitudes, achievement, and moral problems. Review very briefly the portions of this chapter and of the group discussions, which show how important it is that children should have insight into the purposes which we seek to accomplish through our teaching, and that we and they should share together in carrying these out. It would then be well for the teacher, (a) to summarize in his own words, how this affects the Christian teaching of children; and (b) to point out the connection with the following chapter, which deals with children's understanding and use of words.

"My Friend"

6. Briefly describe your friends as to: (a) The specifically religious knowledge which he has, such as familiarity with Bible characters and stories, Christian hymns, etc.; (b) his interest in such matters; (c) his memory ability; and especially, (d) his insight into the work of his department or group in the church, and into such religious questions as engage the attention and interest of other children of his own age.

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CHAPTER VII

UNDERSTANDING AND EXPRESSION

LANGUAGE, as a means of communication, greatly enriches the sharing of ourselves with one another. This in turn is one of the most significant ways by which the social self is built up. Language is a necessity in the development of character.

Again, words are symbols, which we use in order to be able to name the great realities of religion, and point toward the possibilities of richer religious experience. Through language we have the high privilege of seeking to describe God, awaken children's awareness of Him, and enrich their understanding of the relation they may have to God.

And language makes possible the use of records of other experience than our own, past and present. All this story, as for example in the Bible, becomes familiar, if at all, through language.

For such reasons it is vital that the Christian teacher should know as much as may be, regarding children's understanding of language and their own expression of self through language.

VOCABULARY

Size. One will keep in mind from the beginning, how limited a child's vocabulary is.

Morgan has summarized a number of studies of the vocabulary of children, as follows:[1]

Age	*Average*	*Range*
1 year	9	3-24
2 years	528	115-1127
3 years	910	150-1807
4 years	1516	811-2777
5 years	2204	1528-2948
6 years	2963	2688-3132
8 years	3600	
10 years	5400	
12 years	7200	
14 years	9400	

Such facts are significant for the church in at least three aspects. First, they point to the difficulty met when children under four are placed in the church Kindergarten Department. Rather than plan a Nursery Department for children of two and three, many churches place them with older children in the Kindergarten. Comparison of size of average vocabularies for the ages three to six suggests one important reason for the inability of the younger children to take part satisfactorily.

Second, they point to the barriers in a child's mind which are met in the attempt to use Uniform Lesson material, even with the best possible "adaptation." A child may simply lack the vocabulary essential for the understanding of ideas which are rich in meaning for older persons.

And third, they remind one of the great differences in

[1] Morgan, J. J. B., *Child Psychology*, p. 254. Farrar & Rinehart, 1931.

individual children who make up any one group. Christian teaching certainly should result in the enlargement of individual vocabularies. But particular words familiar to some children may be strange to others in the group. The teacher needs to be constantly alert to make sure that key words being used are familiar to all members of the group.

Parts of Speech. In the earliest speech of a child interjections are noticeably common, and nouns are acquired in large numbers. From the first year on, the proportion of verbs is relatively very large.

Young children ordinarily have difficulty with relative pronouns, personal pronouns, and connecting parts of speech.

To speak to little children best, one uses direct speech, simple sentences, and employs nouns and verbs generously. Observe how this is done in a few sentences of a story as told by Miss Elizabeth Shields:[2]

> Everybody wanted to be near Him. They liked to hear Him talk. They liked to look into His eyes and to see Him smile.
>
> Some of the mothers had brought their little children with them.
>
> One of the mothers thought to herself, "I wish my little child could stand very close to Jesus—so close that He could take her up in His arms."

First Meanings

The earliest meanings of words to a child grow out of

[2] *Guiding Kindergarten Children in the Church School*, pp. 140-41. Onward Press, 1931.

his experience with the things and events to which he attaches those words. Then when the word is used in his hearing, the idea which arises in his thinking is based on the experience which he has had.

Use and Action. The first associations of a word in a child's mind are deeply colored by the use made of the thing for which the word stands, or by some activity connected with it.

This is readily seen when one asks a child to define a word. Many studies of children's speech have called attention to the frequency with which his definitions are put in terms of use and action.

Thus, a child of six or seven may tell you that, "A horse is to ride," "A village is to buy candy in," "A bird is to make meat with, or is good to lay little eggs," "A mama is good to cook, or to whip little children," or "A mama is to take care of children."[3]

Barnes, in the study just cited, showed that this method of defining words in terms of use remained fairly consistent through childhood. Not every child will give such a definition, but at any age during childhood a large percentage do.

Thus it appears that early ideas connected with a word carry a large element of association with doing and action. Accordingly, in dealing with new words and ideas, especially with Beginners and Primaries, it appears wise to put our explanations in a way which will correspond to this habit of thinking in childhood.

Limited Experience. It is easy to forget how limited

[3] Barnes, E., *Studies in Education*, Vol. I, p. 207. Philadelphia, 1903.

a child's experience is, and to use words in teaching, which will have no meaning to a child.

Some years ago President G. Stanley Hall, of Clark University, startled the educational world of his day by presenting the results of studies showing how ignorant children of six were of some objects and ideas which we are likely to take for granted that they know. Among Boston children, for example, 75.5 per cent did not know what season of the year it was. More than half had not seen the sunrise or the sunset. Fifty-four per cent did not know what a sheep is. Eighty-three per cent or more lacked familiarity with common trees like pines, oaks, and elms. Common crops, like wheat, beans, and corn, were unknown to 65 per cent or more of the children. The conception of a hill was lacking for 28 per cent of the children, that of a river by 48 per cent, and that of woods by 53.5 per cent. So it went, with a long list of equally unexpected findings.[4]

Quite recently in the city of Los Angeles the Board of Education in similar fashion discovered that a fourth of the children had never seen a milch cow and half of them had never seen a calf.

Hall drove his point home to all teachers by the oft-quoted statement: "There is next to nothing of pedagogic value, the knowledge of which it is safe to assume at the outset of school life. Hence the need of objects and the danger of books and word-cram."[5]

Limited Idea of God. Since a child's experience is so

[4] Hall, G. S., *The Contents of Children's Minds on Entering School,* pp. 18-20. New York, 1893.

[5] *Op. cit.,* p. 26.

limited in *all* respects, it need not startle us when we discover that his idea of God is also limited. How could it be otherwise?

A child's earliest idea of God appears ordinarily to be what is called "anthropomorphic," that is, patterned after the form of man. In church school one day, when "God" was mentioned, Karl, aged five, said at once, "My daddy brought me a kite with a picture of God on it." Questions drew out the fact that the kite carried a picture of "Uncle Sam," and Karl had associated the "Uncle of all little boys and girls," with "God, the Father of all little children," whom he had heard mentioned so often.

Frequently a child will think that "God" is the name of some individual who has been mentioned or seen in such a way as to become associated in his mind with the word "God." Thus, now and then a child thinks that the minister is God; or that the janitor is God. In either case this might come about because of the mention of "God's house," in which a child sees these characters so often! Instances are told of children who thought God was some individual who had recently come in through a gate at the child's home; or that God was the name of some person who had come to see the family not long before. It is easy to see how expressions used by adults regarding "God coming in," could lead to such ideas.

In like manner the idea of God may take on, for a child, any one or more of an almost endless number of possible associations. For example, we sing of God as "Ancient of days, who sittest throned in glory." Whether from this or whatever other source, many children have

the mental image of God as a very old man, with a long white beard.

Dr. A. H. MacLean found that 40 per cent of a group of children eight years old and under, thought of God as being a man having flesh, bones, and whiskers. Fifteen per cent described him as being a man, but gave no further details. MacLean's work, however, is open to the criticism that he suggested these ideas to the children through the form of approach used in the interviews.[6]

But other studies seem to show similar results when a child is given opportunity to express his ideas spontaneously. In Hall's work, previously cited,[7] this was strikingly evident, especially in the extent to which the children associated the idea of God with phenomena of the natural world. For instance, some children understood thunder as God groaning or kicking, or turning a big handle, or breaking something, or putting in coal, or hitting the clouds. Others thought of God as keeping rain in heaven in a big sink, or in rows of buckets, and letting the water down through a hose or a sieve. When people die, some children thought of them as being put in a hole, whence they might fly up to God in the sky. There God would catch them; or perhaps He would lift them up, or they might go to Him on a ladder or a rope.

Again, a child often puts into his idea of God some element derived from the life or character of his parents. Bovet, Piaget, and others have believed that a little child spontaneously attributes to his parents qualities of per-

[6] MacLean, A. H., *The Idea of God in Protestant Religious Education*, p. 70f. Teachers College, Columbia University, 1930.
[7] Hall, G. S., *op. cit.*, p. 38f.

fection, such as knowing everything, being all-powerful, and so on, which he will later attribute to God if he has contact with religious teaching.

In so far as this may be true, it raises a host of problems for both parents and teachers. At home there is the constant recognition that the qualities of character seen in the father and mother, may be transferred to the idea of God the Father. Many parents, recognizing this, find in that fact a motive for finer living. A mother told me of hearing this conversation between her little son of about three, and his imaginary companion:

Boy. "What is a mother?"

Companion. "A mother is to love you and take care of you."

Boy. "What is a daddy?"

Companion. "A daddy is to go out and make money."

Through that little scene they faced anew the question of what his parents meant to their son.

In the church school the teacher faces a necessity which is at the same time one of the greatest opportunities, and that is to take these partial, fragmentary, and often impoverished ideas of God as a starting-point, and then lead a child into fuller insight into His character.

Enriched Meanings

Forming Concepts. The earliest idea of an object or an event, we were saying, arises out of a child's experience with it. That idea was very specific, being an idea of some one thing or happening. But a child soon begins to form "concepts."

A concept is a general idea which we have, of a class of

things. Thus, a child just learning to talk may say "Papa," when he sees his own father. Then, to his mother's dismay, he is quite as likely to use the same word "Papa" in greeting any man he meets. But presently he learns that all these belong in a class called "men"—and he has formed a concept of "man."

In middle and later childhood children are forming a great number of concepts. During that period, especially at about seven and eight years of age, with children of average intelligence, they are repeatedly doing three kinds of mental acts, all of which are a part of the forming of concepts.[8]

One is closely observing what the qualities of an object are, that is, what its characteristics are. The second is observing what the differences are between the qualities of two or more objects. Thus, you have probably noticed how interested children of this age often are in riddles. They love to ask you, "What is the difference" between one object or another. The third kind of mental act is putting together things that can properly go together in one class, or "classifying," to form a concept or general idea. He may now tell you that a "house is a building," or that "a peach is fruit," and so on.

Concreteness. These concepts are ordinarily very concrete, in a child's mind. A Primary child, for example, when asked, "What is a discovery?" replied, "A discovery is when you go out and find something."

If opportunity offers, ask a well-educated adult to define "depression," and then compare his statement

[8] Compare Morgan, *op. cit.*, pp. 255-57.

with this one, written by the Abbe children, apparently in late childhood: "New York is very crowded and no one was ever singing or marching and everyone looked angry on the streets. Mama said that was depression. Depression is something that depresses you, then you have no job, then you must take money from the President, and that makes you bashful."[9]

The Character of God. Just as a child is closely observing the qualities of objects around him and trying to form broader ideas, so it is too in reference to God if the influences surrounding him are such as to point his thought in that direction. He is forming his idea of the qualities in God, and that is exactly what we adults mean when we speak of the character of God. Mental activity of this kind is quite characteristic of middle and later childhood, but it may appear either earlier or later, depending greatly on environmental influences.

The happenings of their little world lead many children to conceive the character of God as one in which the dominant characteristic is such traits as anger, malice, or even spite. Hubbel has told of a moment during a terrible storm, when he was four and in a nurse maid's care. The maid, badly frightened, cried, "God is angry!" Hubbel has said that the cry kindled in him the "spark of religion"[10]—but one would suppose it must have been a religion closely associated with fear and with the thought of God's anger.

[9] Abbe, Patience, Richard and John, *Around the World in Eleven Years,* p. 139. Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1936.

[10] Bovet, P., *The Child's Religion,* p. 36. E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1928.

However it may have been in his case, Grigg-Smith has presented accounts of a number of children who thought that the misfortunes of life meant God was striking back at people for some relatively minor wrong-doing. This was an especially cruel idea to many children during Great War days, when fathers and brothers did not return, and children feared that their death meant God was angry at the men who stayed in France.[11]

Again, children wrestle with the idea that God is everywhere. Apparently many children "get" this idea rather early, at least in words, and apparently in much more than mere words. Several authentic stories are told, however, showing that after the death of a loved person, a child often believes that person is everywhere now, because he is with God, and God is everywhere. One little girl, upon being told that her father had gone to be with Jesus, struggled long with the idea that the father could come back from Jesus' house in an airplane, well again. The mother felt it was at least an advance for the child, when the latter began to speak of the father as now being "all around us."[12]

Then many children, at least with wise help, begin to conceive that God is present, in some especial manner, when certain kinds of events are taking place. For example, they may see that He is present in the orderly processes of nature. This was the insight that seems to have come to a Junior pupil of whom Grime tells. The group was reviewing, and trying to state as individuals

[11] Grigg-Smith, T., *The Child's Knowledge of God,* especially p. 81f. The Macmillan Company, 1920.

[12] *Pilgrim Elementary Teacher,* XXI (April, 1937), p. 139f.

what they had learned during a succession of studies of the early part of the Old Testament. One child said: "God's laws don't work this way and that way—milk for breakfast turning into gasoline for dinner—they work slowly, steadily. They don't bump into each other."[13]

It is but a step further—and yet how great a one!—to the understanding that God is love, and that love in its true sense is uniquely a sign that God is there. One group of Junior children were helped to reach this insight, by a vacation school unit which they called "Playing Detective." They so developed their work as to take them on a series of trips about their city, seeing the things being done around them to help people. They went to a Neighborhood House which had a motto carved over the door, "Where love is, God is," taken from Tolstoy's story of the cobbler Adyevich. One of the girls was delegated to write that story again and put it in a paper being published by the group.[14] We may suppose that leadership of such work brings children very near to the same insight that came to Moses, when "The Lord said unto Moses, thou canst not see my face," but, "I will make my goodness pass before thee."

The Need for Enlarged Experience

Since a child's experience furnishes the basis for his concepts, it is of utmost importance that his experience should be enlarged if he is to have adequate ideas of

[13] Grime, W., *Modern Methods in the Church School*, p. 43. Round Table Press, 1934.

[14] *Pilgrim Elementary Teacher*, XXI (May, 1937), p. 221f.

great religious realities. Let us consider certain ways in which a teacher may attempt to enlarge a child's experience so that great concepts may take on enriched meaning.

Through Memorized Verbal Statements. One way to attempt this is through having a child memorize "correct" verbal statements regarding God, Jesus, love, right, duty, sin, or whatever else we are concerned that he shall understand.

With some children this may result at once in better insight into meanings. This is especially likely to be the case if a child already has a rich background of experience with the matters dealt with in the memorized statement. In that event the statement may serve to let in light upon things which he has already known, but could not name accurately. A story told of Helen Keller, if authentic, illustrates the point. It is said that Phillips Brooks was asked to write her, giving an explanation of God. To his letter she replied, "I always knew there was a God, but I never knew His name." But observe that instances of this kind are themselves a climax experience, because they help insight, and do not substitute words for experience.

But there is much to keep us from relying on this as our chief means for enriching the meanings of great religious ideas. First of all, the words themselves will often fall in the class psychologically called "nonsense material," as pointed out in Chapter VI; that is, they may completely lack meaning for the child who is learning them. In that case they are very likely to be promptly forgotten. This may turn out to be no more

than a comparatively harmless waste of time in the name of religion, if such a thing is possible.

But perhaps more vicious is the fact that partial understanding of meaning will often result in serious misunderstanding of meaning. When a child begins to flounder in a mass of half-comprehended words, he is likely to shift and reassemble a body of already distorted ideas, and thus be led into religious confusion worse confounded.

Such confusion is frequently seen when a child begins to try to make his own use of ideas that are only half grasped, as, for example, after learning definitions of God. One boy of twelve, upon being asked to tell what he would do if he saw a ghost, wrote: "If I saw a ghost I would say my prayers because he is a holy Ghost the holy spirit two the holy gose is a good man he gives us food to eat and are blankets and clothing I will thank the holy Ghosts when I say my prayers at night & when I get up in the morning."[15] What a jumble of ideas as the result of someone's sincere effort to teach through "correct word"!

Other children have been known to respond with satisfactory words about the love of God, but to express fear on later occasions, lest they should meet the Holy Ghost in the dark. Again, how near to a sublime insight, and yet how far from it, barred away by misunderstood words!

Through Analogy. In analogy we compare one truth with another, so that a truth which we are trying

[15] Maitland, in Barnes's *Studies in Education,* Vol. I, p. 55. Philadelphia, 1903.

to explain may become clearer. This is not the same as illustrating by means of an example of the thing we are talking about. When we use analogy, we bring up something from another realm of experience, and lay it alongside the thing we wish to make plain.

Analogies are often superb means for driving home a truth when dealing with adult minds. But it is easy for us to assume that they are equally effective with children, when quite the contrary is likely to be the case. Again and again children will miss the carry-over which was intended, and will take some part of the analogy with perfect literalness. We may illustrate the kind of response which children often make to analogies, by taking examples from three different kinds of analogy.

One kind of analogy is that in which we compare a trait of character in one kind of experience, with a similar trait in a different kind of experience. Thus, a young minister was speaking to a group of Junior children about following the star to Bethlehem. In much detail he described the journey on the camels, the night scene, and the brilliance of the star. That persistent journey to reach a place, he told the Juniors, was like faithfulness to an ideal. How could we be faithful to our ideals? By doing the best we know how to do, and doing it carefully. That was following our star. So he ended his talk, very clear to an adult. But he bethought him he had best review the matter with the Juniors before they went home. "Now, children, how did the wise men follow the star?" Up shot a hand, a boy stood proudly, and said with great distinctness, "On their camels."

Another kind of analogy is the object lesson. There are many books on the market, suggesting chalk talks, or the use of chemicals, or numerous other kinds of objects, to be used before children in the effort to help them understand the meaning of great Christian ideas. Professor E. P. St. John tells of a response to one of these "chemical sermons." A glass of clear water represented the "pure heart of an innocent child." Into this was poured a dark liquid, standing for the defiling effects of sin. He then spoke of the various faults and sins of children which might defile their hearts. Now came the red liquid, representing the blood of Jesus. A few drops were poured into the dark water, which became clear again, picturing how the blood of Jesus cleanses from sin.

At the close of the service, an eight-year-old boy came to one of the women of the church, saying, "Miss B, I want some of that red medicine to make me good." And Professor St. John added: "Poor little fellow! When the minister spoke of the child's struggle to be good and his failure to reach the standard set for him by older people, he knew what he was talking about. But the minister had spoiled it by his analogy. He had aroused the desire to be better, only to have it trail away into a magic notion about red medicine to make one good."[16]

A third kind of analogy is the parable, so admirable as a way of bringing insight to maturer minds, but often difficult for children because they may fail to see how the meaning carries over into their own lives. Franklin

[16] *Religious Education*, Vol. XIX (December, 1924), p. 392.

made tests with a large number of pupils in the fourth and fifth grades, to discover the extent to which they understood the parables. They could get the literal teaching, but they often fumbled with the analogy. The parable of the Two Foundations is an example. Children of nine could see readily that sand was not a good foundation for a house, and that rock is. But it was only when children were three or four years older—out of the children's section of the church—that they were able to grasp the meanings which rock and sand, storms and wind represent in our lives.[17] In the meantime they may have kept faulty interpretations of the parable.

Through Correcting and Enriching Existing Meanings. A better way of teaching for the enrichment of meanings is first to discover what the meanings of key words are, and then to give those words richer meaning through story, through careful explanations, and through illustrations which are examples of the thing talked about and not analogies from some other realm.

The first step, as indicated, is the discovery of present meanings of words in children's thinking. There is need for this in the case of any words being frequently used with a group of children. In a vacation school, the teachers planned a simple test which children could mark as they are accustomed to do in public school, selecting the meaning which they believed each word in the test had. Among the Primary children, many thought the word "bless" meant to thank; that "Amen" meant a man, or the end; that "worship" meant to sing or to

[17] *Ibid.*, Vol. XXI (December, 1926), pp. 611-17.

talk; and that "browsing" meant playing or running, even though a "browsing table" with inviting books was in the room and had been mentioned frequently from the first day.

Among the Junior children, several significant words were still associated in the children's thinking with some of the very ideas which the teachers were trying to crowd out or broaden. For example, many of the children thought "important" meant big; that "hero" meant soldier; that "neighbor" meant friend; and that "love" meant to kiss.

It was obvious in both departments that enrichment of meaning of many key words was needed. But suppose that a child, who thinks of love as kissing, falls into the hands of a teacher whose main concern is to have that child "define" God by a verbal statement regarding the love of God!

The attempt to broaden and enrich the meanings was undertaken by just such means as suggested above—explanations, examples, and stories.

Through Showing What Ideas Mean in Action. A still better way is by helping children to see what the great key concepts mean in action, as they work out in the lives of people, or as they have been revealed to us through the activity of God in the world.

If that is done, and if the words are then used repeatedly by the teacher as a way of giving a name to things which children can see clearly in other lives, experience in their own lives, and feel working out in their relations with one another, then the great words of the Christian religion "come to life" in the finest sense.

Apparently this was happening among the Junior group mentioned above, through their unit called "Playing Detective," which led them a little way, but a true way, into understanding love in action.

And here lies the incomparable value for the Christian teacher of children, in the use of the character and life and death of Jesus. Again and again, in home and in school, when we are seeking to help children to possess and be possessed by the finest possible concepts of God, we may make it plain to children that *here* is where we may best see the character of God; for as Paul put it, "God was in Christ." He was there, disclosing Himself in concrete action, which not only reveals Him, but stirs us as nothing else does.

Through a Child's Own Active Experience. All the ways which we have mentioned as possibilities for the enriching of a child's understanding of great Christian concepts, are incomplete unless a child lives his way into the meaning of those truths, through his own active experience of them. Until that takes place, he is always in danger of holding a form of words which have never been quite translated into life.

Herbert and Charles lived in adjoining houses but got on together none too well. On a certain Saturday they had come to blows. The next day, just home from church school, Herbert shouted across the fence, "Charles, love thy neighbor!" It may well be that Christian teaching, in many cases, stays as remote as that, from human relations as they actually are.

But Herbert did begin to learn "love of the neighbor" in a fascinating way, presently, through his friendship

for a school companion who was having no end of difficulty, arising primarily out of frustration in his home life. Herbert brought Jan to his own home frequently, shared his own experience which in some respects was more enriching, and helped Jan, as one boy can help another, to feel a sense of worth. This was "love" in action.

Herbert and Charles and Jan are in every church and community. Almost always they will respond to the opportunity to live "the more excellent way," if someone will show it to them in a fashion which a child can understand. And then when they begin to walk in that way, however haltingly, the Christian teacher needs to help them to see that these fascinating new experiences are some of the matters of which religion is talking in its own age-old vocabulary.

Suggestions for Discussion

(The assignments here suggested, if used, should be made as early in the course as possible.)

1. If possible, have some members of the group record and report the words used most frequently by children of Kindergarten, Primary, and Junior age. Have others record the words most frequently used in teaching, by workers in the same departments of the church school. Compare the lists, in the hope of answering two questions: (a) Are we making generous use of words which are familiar to children? And (b) Which words, appropriate to the church situation, are likely to be unfamiliar to the children?

2. Make every reasonable effort to learn what ideas are associated with the words "God" and "Jesus," in the minds of children taught by members of the group. When the

information is reported, consider carefully what its significance is, and what it suggests we should do in our teaching.

3. Have members of the group seek to secure children's own definitions of some of the words frequently used in the respective departments. Consider what the significance of the definitions is, for this group.

4. Give attention to discovering whether any "abstract" ideas are being used with children, which may be beyond their ready grasp. If so, consider how the same ideas may be used in more concrete and specific form.

5. Let the major portion of the discussion be given to the section headed "The Need for Enlarged Experience," taking up any parts of the section which seem relevant to the needs of the group, but carefully reserving time for consideration of "correcting and enriching existing meanings," "showing what ideas mean in action," and guiding a "child's own active experience."

"My Friend"

7. Give as full information as is practical, regarding your friend's use and comprehension of religious ideas, with especial attention to his ideas of God and Jesus. If your own knowledge of your friend is fragmentary at this point, how can you make it more complete? If his ideas seem to be faulty, how can they be enriched?

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CHAPTER VIII

HEALTH OF PERSONALITY

Health of Personality

Mental Health. Roberta seems almost always to be happy. Unpleasant incidents happen to her, as to all, but she soon recovers poise afterward without brooding or sulking, and presently the laughter bubbles up naturally again. She is secure in the love of her parents, but not smothered and dominated by them. Affection for the parents is evident, yet there are hearty friendships outside the home. She loves companionship, and gets on well with both children and adults, but she also knows how to entertain herself when alone. Apparently, there are no fears that trouble her seriously. She has a fair taste of success in the things she attempts, and is eager for new ventures. She seems to know where she is going, without being cocky or priggish.

The signs point to good "mental health" in a boy or girl where such things are so. This certainly does not mean that a child of this kind is perfect, for there is no paragon of virtues among children, except in the goody-goody type of story. Among actual children there are all degrees of mental health, just as there are of physical health. Exceedingly few have perfect health, either mental or physical.

But when we speak of mental health, we mean a condition such that all the resources of the self can be em-

ployed in the quest of chosen goals, with a sense of security in living, and with reasonable adequacy in one's efforts. It is customary to refer to individuals who are in good mental health as being "well-integrated personalities."

The Well-Integrated Personality is marked by two especially significant characteristics. One is the fact that his emotional life ministers to his sense of well-being, and aids his achievement. It is relatively free of fear, worry, anxiety, hate, jealousy, self-depreciation, and the like, which eat up the energy of the self in conflict. One feels emotionally at home in his world, loving and trusting in such a way as to release the energy of the self for accomplishment. This aspect of personality, or its lack if such be the case, is very evident in children.

The second is the fact that the energy of the self is devoted, consistently and over long periods of time, to the quest of chosen goals. The integrated personality has purpose in living. Some great master purpose is not ordinarily so evident in children as it is in well-integrated adults. But children are reaching for it, as may be seen in their efforts to select a career, and in their struggles to decide what kind of person they mean to be.

The life and work of the Church has in it much which ministers to integration of personality in both these aspects. Parts of this have been mentioned in previous chapters; and in the final chapter we shall seek to summarize it. But at this point we give attention especially to conditions which threaten health of personality in children such as you will ordinarily deal with in the church school.

Threats to Health of Personality

In Chapter IV we spoke of the drives or urges of human nature, and mentioned four "wishes": for security, for new experience, for recognition, and for response. Some psychologists think of all these as being summed up in one still deeper and more fundamental wish. Some speak of it as the wish for completeness, or for wholeness. Others call it the wish for self-realization, which is as suitable a name as any.

Any individual, child or adult, meets with threats to this fundamental wish for self-realization. Observe what some of the more common threats in childhood are.

Lack of Affection. We have frequently mentioned the effect upon a child when affection is lacking in the relations with his parents. His whole world is made to feel insecure if he does not first find emotional security in the affection of those nearest him.

Failure in Self-respect. The James family, consisting of father, mother, and Sophia, who is a Junior in church school, live in an uncomfortable house, struggle with debts, and associate with people in better economic circumstances. Mr. James has started in one career after the other, only to give up each in turn when he could not make good. In middle life he barely ekes out a living, with diminishing prospects ahead. Sophia has lived in an atmosphere of failure since infancy. She has heard it morning, noon, and night. The self-respect of the entire family is threatened. We shall hear of Sophia again presently.

Failure in Social Relations. Rebecca is the only

chick in a nest of admiring parents and older relatives. Badly spoiled in this little world of adults who try to help her realize every desire, she finds things very different in the world of children her own age. She cannot manage them as she does the folk at home. They argue with her, and she argues back all the more vehemently. She takes up new friends, but they soon drop her. When she comes into a group of children, they turn on her savagely. She seems unable to get the same standing with other children of her own age which many of her acquaintances achieve.[1] More of Rebecca, too, shortly.

Failure in Achievement. Suppose you were a child, and poor in arithmetic. You labor over it, but you never can see clearly which rule to apply. You try to memorize it, but things won't stick in your mind. Every morning, five days a week, nine months in the year, you awake knowing you must face that arithmetic lesson. You know each day before it happens that the teacher will hold you up in some way as a failure. For Up-the-Line someone has sent achievement tests to your school, so that your teacher must try to bring you up to "standard." But you are not an "average" pupil in arithmetic, for something doesn't click in you with this whole business of arithmetic. Your parents try to help you, ashamed of you and not quite able to conceal it. You can't get away from the school, because law compels you to go. You rebel, trying to strike back; and they mark you

[1] In reference to all the "cases" described in this chapter, the reader is cautioned against jumping to conclusions when similar attitudes or behavior are noted in other children. Underlying reasons may be entirely different.

down in "citizenship" or "conduct," whatever it is called in your school. There you are, caught between the upper and the nether millstones of your own inability and the state's compulsion. No one meant it to be so, but none the less between the two you have the sense of failure ground in deeper each day.

That's just where thousands of children live. In some one subject, or in all of them put together, they have it driven in to them every day: "You are failing! You must do what you can't do!! You are failing!!!"

Don't you see you would have to do something about it, or be mangled?

Feeling of Inadequacy. Experiences of failure may shake a child's confidence in himself so deeply as to give him the sense of being distinctly inadequate or inferior. This is especially likely to be the case if he suffers by comparison with other children in his family or among close acquaintances.

A similar feeling may result if a child has an unusual physique, especially if he is small and weakly. And so too if he is unusually ugly.

Horrible Experience. Jane Nelson lived in a small town where her father was a bank cashier. Jane and her father were the best of pals. In a healthy way she admired him most of all men. The family was comfortable in circumstances, happy in their life together, and respected by the community.

But one day the whole world as Jane knew it, tumbled in. Her father was charged with misappropriation of funds, and arrested. After a long delay, and a trial which had every tongue working for miles around,

Nelson was sent to prison. Then began the slow, cruel ostracism of the family, who had done none of this wrong, but now were gradually pushed away to themselves.

Instances of horrible experience in children's lives are only too numerous. Great calamity to home or community, failure or death of someone loved, accident or disease which leaves the body maimed—these and endless others, suddenly crash to pieces the world as a child has known it.

Fear. Fear, in its many forms, is a threat to self-realization. It is accompanied by bodily changes which interfere with normal living during the time one is afraid. It walls off the object of fear, making a child wish to shut it out from his world; and if that may not be, making him wish to shut himself away from it. And a child may also fear imagined or anticipated events. In proportion as fears of this kind grow, he becomes prey to the fear state. This condition is vaguer than the fear of specific objects, but in some ways is more damaging, because one fears what is not present, and hence may become greatly disturbed by merely thinking about what may happen.

On the basis of laboratory experiments with infants, Professor John B. Watson concluded that fear has only two natural causes: sudden loss of support, and loud noises. He believes that all of an individual's fears of specific objects or events may be traced to some experience in which one or the other of these native causes of fear was encountered.

Other experimental work, however, seems to show

that the origin of specific fears in children is not so simple as Watson would have it. For one thing, the results obtained by Irwin, Shirley, English, and Valentine make it appear doubtful whether all children are naturally afraid of sudden loss of support and loud noises.

But more important for practical life is the fact that as children mature they often lose fears which they earlier had, and they frequently become afraid in situations which they calmly accepted when younger.

In their study called *Children's Fears,* A. T. Jersild and F. B. Holmes point out seven groups of situations and objects which frequently cause fear in children. They are: (1) Sudden, rapid motions, lights, flashes, shadows, and reflections. (2) Noises, or events associated with noise, or noise plus motion. (3) Strange objects, situations, and persons. (4) Harm, danger of bodily injury, and falling. (5) Dark, being alone, and imaginary creatures when alone or in the dark. (6) Imaginary creatures, apart from darkness or being alone. (7) Dreams such as of ridicule, death, robbers, of being alone, or of imaginary creatures.

They also point out that the prevailing nature of children's fears changes with age. Between the ages of two and five there is a decline in the frequency of fear of such events as noise, strange objects, strange persons and situations, and the fear of falling. But during those years there is an increase in fears of the dark and fears of imaginary and supernatural beings, increased foreboding that accident or injury may happen, and with some children more frequent terror dreams and night-

mares. After five there is increase of apprehension for one's personal status, fear lest one will not make a good showing, and fear of ridicule. Fear of animals remains frequent in all ages.[2]

Fear, then, is not only a response to what is actual and present; but it is also a response to what is anticipated and may never happen. It is a double threat to self-realization because of our capacity for fearing what is not but might be.

Observe how these two kinds of fear may become entwined, and how they can spread. Philip was a sunny, responsive boy in the Primary Department. But as Christmas approached and the children began practicing carols, "some strange terror seemed to strike at him," says Helen Elmira Waite, telling the story.[3] "He was restless, unhappy, frightened, actually hiding in the hall so that he might escape the devotional period when we sang our songs. It was there I found him one Sunday, his little face desperate and his eyes filled with tears. No, he wouldn't come in—'those Christmas songs make the water come in my eyes.' I knew his family, and was able to fathom the reasons for Phil's behavior: There had been an adored older sister who had been a gay little songster before she slipped away to that Far Country on the previous Christmas. Perhaps Phil had been told that 'now she was singing with the angels.' Later I discovered he had developed a fear that either his father or his mother would leave on the approaching Christmas.

[2] *Op. cit.* (Teachers College, Columbia, 1935), pp. 44, 323-25.
[3] *International Journal of Religious Education,* XII (October, 1935), p. 13.

No wonder the songs which the other children sang so joyously held only terror for him!"

Sense of Marred Relation With God. A child is taught that his relation with God is the supreme relation of his life. But at the best we can ever do, some children will fail to understand that relation as one which should be marked by trust, and lead to a sense of peace. Instead, there are times when a child's relation to God, as the child conceives it, is marred or broken, and he may become terror-stricken in consequence.

Perhaps periods of real agony arising from this source are less frequent now than formerly. Older biographies often reveal periods of acute suffering in a child, because he believed he was lost. But whatever the frequency of it may be, there still is suffering and fear in children in modern times, arising out of the belief that they have offended God and that He is angry.

Norma has told me of such a time in her life, twenty years ago, but still one of her most vivid memories. In church school one day the conversation turned to questions about heaven.

"What do people do in heaven?" asked Norma.

"God wants everybody to praise Him," replied the teacher, "so when we are in heaven, we shall spend all our time singing praises to God."

Norma said nothing, but secretly she thought: "Why, that's the most conceited thing I ever heard of! I don't want to go there and spend all my time, for always and always, doing nothing but praise God."

Then fear struck. God would not love her, she thought, because she did not want to go to heaven; so

He would find her, and send her to hell instead. She went home, and crouched in terror behind the piano, hoping God could not find her there. For days she spent every possible moment in that spot, hoping for shelter, yet weeping with fear.

What Can a Child Do? Look back a moment at the "threats to self-realization" which we have tried to see in concrete form. As we passed from one to another, you may have thought: "Why, the child could do nothing about *that!* He could not change the conditions which threatened him. He is helpless." By and large, that *is* true of these threats.

A child not only is unable to change the conditions which threaten him, but, further, he cannot get away from them as Tom Sawyer did when he took to the river. He cannot alter his father's financial situation, nor give himself a larger body, nor bring the dead to life. And even if Nelson is pardoned, the stigma remains.

We asked you to imagine you were the boy failing at school, forced to attend, and then being branded because you could not succeed at a task which was impossible for you. We said, "Don't you see you would have to do something about it, or be mangled?"

A child does do something about it. As we shall see in the next chapter, he may take refuge in some form of antisocial behavior. But here we are thinking especially of children who are unwilling to break openly with society. When that is the case, and when, further, a child cannot change the threatening conditions, and cannot get away from them, *he makes an adjustment in his inner world,* which enables him to meet the threat.

He may make either of two kinds of adjustment in his inner world. One is to "escape mentally."

Escapes

Characteristics. These mental escapes have three notable characteristics.

One is the fact that the person gets away from a difficulty without squarely facing it and finding a solution which will make him a stronger personality because of the difficulty. He comes out, not more healthful in personality, but less so.

The second is that one does not deliberately reason out his way of escape. Some psychologists speak of these escapes as "unconscious mechanisms." They are blind and "instinctive" in the same sense that it is instinctive to have the wish for recognition. If we cannot have it in a form which society approves, we want it anyhow—and get it. This being so, the person who is escaping from a threatening condition usually does not, himself, understand what he is doing.

And third, the results of a child's habit of escaping from his difficulties, frequently are not seen until he is mature. If someone whom he trusts can help him to change, *when he is a child,* tragic consequences in adulthood may often be prevented.

Now, what are some of the escapes, as you may see them in children?

Criticizing Others. Rebecca, spoken of above, was unable to make a place for herself socially with girls of her own age. She meets this threat to self-realization by trying to take away the position which other girls have

achieved, thus attempting to bring them to her level when she cannot get to theirs. Not that she consciously reasons it out in this manner; but this probably lies behind her growing habit of criticizing people. She belittles the clothes, the friends, the homes, the belongings, and the achievements, of nearly every other girl mentioned in her hearing.

Sophia, also mentioned above, is doing about the same thing as a way of maintaining her self-respect when the family's standing is threatened. You never forget the digs she gives her acquaintances. It is as if she wishes to make them fall with her.

Blaming Others. When one is put in a bad light for any reason, he often tries to support his self-esteem by throwing the blame on another. The teacher is unfair, the parent is partial, or other children were Eves tempting to wrongdoing. Not infrequently a child will invent some imaginary scapegoat, as Paul did at the age of four. He remarked one day, "There are bad angels around here." His mother answered, "You mean good angels." "No, bad angels; they make me bite Jean," he replied.[4]

Compensation. Compensation is making up for defects or failures in one line, by success in another. All considered, this may be one of the most wholesome ways by which a child can maintain his own self-respect. There are times, however, when one suspects that it accompanies adjustments which are not wholesome. Rebecca,

[4] From *The Pilgrim Elementary Teacher*, by Margaret Allen, XXI (February, 1937), p. 43. The Pilgrim Press. Used by permission.

for example, is doing this, in addition to supporting her self-esteem by criticizing others. She is making every effort to achieve outstanding success in school. Desirable as this is in itself, it undoubtedly raises questions when seen in light of the total set of difficulties she confronts, for she is growing supercilious toward other pupils who achieve lesser success in school.

Becoming Sick. Facing a threatening situation and seeing no way to meet it, one frequently becomes ill. If you have read the life of Elizabeth Barrett Browning, you will recall how the home conditions made it impossible for her to live a normal girl's life. She became an invalid, and remained so throughout maturity.

Illnesses of this nature are extremely difficult to heal, and require the help of persons especially trained for that service to human suffering.

However, you may frequently observe a similar process beginning on a simple scale with a child in your group. Edmund often reported severe pains in his stomach in the morning, with inability to eat. Solicitous parents put him to bed until it was noted that these illnesses took place on Fridays. Then it was remembered that Friday was the big day for tests in school.

How easy it would be for you—the child failing in school—to develop some illness as a way out! And when at long last you, as a sick child, had the attention you hungered for, how easy to prolong the illness, and how hard to get well and go back!

Building a Dream World. Jane Nelson, whose father was sent to prison, could see no way to the realization of all that a child desires in life. If the church

which she joined as a Junior had seen her deepest needs, they might have surrounded her with understanding fellowship, helping her to keep self-respect by actually having the emotional support of respected persons in the crisis. But no one thought to do that. They prayed about it, but they stayed away.

Gradually she withdrew into a dream world, in which she could achieve the standing denied by her community. She read much during her solitude, and as years went on, she began to imagine herself quite a philosopher. When she talked with people at all, it was with easy contempt for these dull clods around her, who could not share her "deep" thoughts.

When she should have been making friends with boys of her own age, no one would go with "that Nelson girl." But what of it? She was equal to it! She affected a quiet disdain of all males, young or old. Sufficient to herself—she thought.

So the dream world grew, and the real world receded month by month. Today she is in a hospital, incapable of responsibility. The doctors give a long, technical name to her condition. The church people, who could probably have saved all this had they understood, simply say, "She is insane."

Your Help

Consider, now, some of the ways in which you may be able to help children who confront some threat such as those mentioned. It is possible you may assist in preventing some children from further effects of fear, or

from taking an "escape" as a way out. And if children of your group have already begun some habit of escape, it is possible you may help them to find some more wholesome way of meeting it.

Help to More Satisfying Experience. Philip, you recall, had the fear that his father or mother would leave him at Christmas. The songs associated with his sister's death, and with this fear, aroused a new and distressing combination of sorrow, dread, and fear.

Some were for forcing the little fellow to go in, and at least listen to the carols. That would cure him of such foolishness! But the teacher remembered a time when she, as a child, had felt horror of the church after hearing a sermon on "The Slaughter of the Innocents." She knew that agony cannot be rooted out by force.

So for a few Sundays she allowed Phil to remain outside the room during the songs, helping her by getting materials ready for use by the group. He would then come in during the story. Instead of attacking the fear directly, she helped him to feel significant as a person in the very situation where he was afraid. Soon he lost his fear of the carols.[5] Observe that this did not remove the anticipatory fear of further death in his family, but it did remove that one specific fear of carols.

The teacher had made use of a principle very important in dealing with fears; that is, helping a child to have a satisfying experience with an object or in a situation which had aroused a fear. This is like the principle mentioned in Chapter IV, when we said that aversions

[5] *Op. cit.*

are not reasoned away, but may be dispelled by other emotional states.

Often a child can be helped to do this for himself. Many children deliberately discipline themselves in going up against the feared thing, as in diving, swimming, or going into dark places. The satisfaction of finding one *can* do it, helps to banish the fear. Or a child may feel inferior socially, hence be apprehensive of failure and ridicule, and fear social contacts. He may be helped to learn better social skills, and thus to lose this kind of fear.[6]

Here too lies one of the ways for helping a child to overcome the feeling of inadequacy. The experience of success is sometimes the best possible tonic for the sense of inadequacy. In *The Making and the Unmaking of a Dullard,*[7] Father Thomas E. Shields has told of a farm boy, counted hopelessly stupid. The possibilities latent in the boy were awakened by the simple process of discovering how to rig a grubbing machine powerful enough to pull stumps out of the ground. In mature life Shields was a university professor; and the story is said to be autobiographical.

Help to Better Insight. Many fears will disappear when a child gains better insight. Frequently this happens as a child matures, and is not apparently due to any help from adults. In other instances explanations by parents or teachers will lead a child to see that the fear was groundless.

When religious difficulties result in fear, surely the

[6] Jersild and Holmes, *op. cit.*, pp. 333, 337.
[7] Catholic Education Press, 1921.

help should be of this kind, to the end that a child may have better insight into what was misunderstood. This was the way taken by Norma's mother. Finding the child weeping and hiding, the mother inquired the reason. Norma was reticent at first, but finally the story came tumbling out. The mother took the difficulty and transformed it for Norma by widening the meaning of "praising God." She did this by helping Norma to see that we praise God in many ways; not only by saying and singing, but by living as He wants us to do. Norma began to think of God as One who is happy, not just when people are "saying nice things" to Him, but as glad when people are co-operating and helping one another. That was one of the finest ways of praising God. So the child's conception of God grew; and a fear which should never have been caused, was healed.

Again, better insight into oneself will often help in preventing the growth of some "unconscious mechanism" of escape until it has become a habitual way of meeting a difficulty. It was so with Edmund. His parents helped him to understand that stomachaches on Friday were not the best way to meet school tests. He saw it, and began better study.

But the tragedy of much Christian teaching is that teachers often fail to see that these escapes are a matter for deep concern in the religious life. They assume that such things have no bearing on the teaching of religion. Rebecca and Sophia are pupils in a church school now. Their mental escapes are bringing them into a distinctly unchristian way of living with their companions. But, as yet, no one who teaches them "the Christian way of

life" sees their need for better insight into the reasons for their own growing unhappiness, and their need to be shown better ways of finding abundant life here and now.

Helping to Face Reality. We said above that there are two common ways of meeting a threat to self-realization, one of which is to escape it mentally. The other is to face it squarely, think it through, and find an inward adjustment which will enable one to become stronger and more wholesome because of the barrier which he has encountered and passed.

At times the reality which needs to be faced is outside oneself, existent in the surrounding conditions which are making self-realization so difficult. It's there, and one can neither change it nor wish it away. Jane Nelson, for example, cannot alter the fact of all the father has done. It had best be looked at with open eyes, and admitted frankly as so, with no evasions. Had help reached her in time, perhaps Jane might have been encouraged to talk about the whole matter with understanding friends, until the subject was not so sore to the touch.

But children often accept outward facts very readily; perhaps a more frequent need is that they should face some reality within themselves. Consider how hard it is for children—as for us who are older!—to come squarely to the admission, "I have done what I should not have done." When you seek to arbitrate some quarrel between children, you can almost see the working of the impulse to shift blame to someone else. You can scarcely get beneath the torrent of mutual accusations, and discover what really happened. But at such times

does not a child need to see himself, as well as to have the quarrel mended? Indeed, until one has learned the willingness to face himself when in the wrong, he has little basis for understanding the great Christian principle of repentance as a prelude to forgiveness.

The better insight into oneself, when one is taking some mental escape, is itself a facing of reality. If a child is beginning to find his way out by criticizing or blaming others, or by overcompensatory activity, or by becoming sick, or by building a dream refuge, he may need to confront that fact in himself as a step toward finding a better way to meet his difficulties.

If we make any effort to help a child to face reality within himself, either in reference to wrongdoing or to mental escapes, three counsels are urgent.

The first is that such things are intensely personal. They should not be attempted in groups, and rarely if ever in the presence of any third party. They belong in the privacy of intimate fellowship between two persons who trust each other.

The second is that kindness and sympathy in the adult are requirements for success in such attempts. We may be gravely mistaken in our belief that we understand what is taking place "unconsciously" in a child. If so, we may hurt him deeply, and lose our standing as his friend. And if we are not mistaken, the most we can do is to lead him to decide upon himself about these deepest inner ways in himself. We are not his judges, to saddle our decisions upon him. Still further, facing oneself in these respects is often a shock which no one understands until he himself has passed that way. So

we shall remain content if this facing of himself is not accomplished in a day.

The third is that we have not really rendered much aid until we have concretely shown him better ways than the ones he has taken. Then, when we do make better ways very clear, we leave him with his thought turned outward and not inward.

For paradoxical though it may seem, the end of these matters is well suggested by the title of Thurber's book, *Let Your Mind Alone*. Look at what needs to be looked at, admit what needs admitting, then forget it. Forget it, not as something which one is unwilling to face again any day if need be, but as something which has been done and does not need doing again every day. Then, one turns to the possible achievements that are at hand, and can do them, just because he is not forever thinking about himself.

Help Through Your Relationship. We have not yet spoken directly of one of the most significant ways you can be of help, which is by your relationship with a child as a trusted friend. We have just been suggesting it, as we did earlier in speaking of Jane Nelson. But we shall reserve further mention of this way until the final chapter, hoping that the fuller meaning of an adult's friendship with a child may also be seen in light of certain questions growing out of our consideration of the development of character.

Suggestions for Discussion

(In a twelve-period course, the topic of this chapter might occupy two periods if the leader is at home with this

material. In any event, guard against hasty conclusions which might affect actual children.)

1. Discuss the idea of "mental health," and of "well-integrated personality," until it is certain that the group clearly grasps the conceptions. Then take illustrations from life and describe briefly: (a) Two or three adults chosen from history or from contemporary life; (b) Two or three children known by some of the group.

2. List the "threats to self-realization" mentioned in this chapter, together with any others which you believe should be added. Have the group very briefly show why each one of these, when encountered by an individual, must be adequately met else it may undermine health of personality.

3. Consider an instance of a child known by some of the group who has confronted lack of affection, failure in self-respect, and so forth. Get as clear a picture as possible, of the way in which the child met the threat, what the result in personality development was, where he received help, and where he needed further help.

4. List the "escapes" mentioned in this chapter, and any others which you believe should be added. Have the group show very briefly what each of these does to a personality when it is taken as a way of meeting a difficulty in life.

5. Are instances known to the group, of children who are taking some of the "escapes"? Is it possible to trace back to some "threat" which a child could find no better way to meet?

6. If the group feels the need of it, consider the subject of fear separately. Take instances, showing the cause of the fear, and its practical results in the child's living. Consider the principle stated in this chapter, that it is often possible for a fear to be "cured" by means of a satisfying experience with an object or in a situation which has aroused the fear. Recall all the ways stated in previous chapters, in which a child's experience may be satisfying. Consider how any of these might be used in helping to cure fears which are of concern to members of the group.

7. Make very clear the meaning and importance of the ways in which the teacher may help children in the development of wholesome personality. Lead the group to understand that the personal relationship between teacher and child, though discussed only briefly in this chapter, is fundamental in importance.

"My Friend"

8. To what extent does your friend have the characteristics of a well-integrated personality? (See the first section of this chapter.) Do you see indications of any such "escapes" as are described in this chapter? If so, is there any reason to suppose they are connected with any of the "threats to self-realization" which have been mentioned? Does this suggest any needs in the life of your friend which you might help to meet? In what way do you believe you might help in meeting these needs?

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CHAPTER IX

GROWTH OF CHARACTER

Behavior Problems

Frequent Difficulties. In dealing with children at home or in school certain difficulties are met so frequently that one may expect any small group of parents or teachers to report some of these forms of behavior as being among the problems with which they must contend.

Among children of kindergarten age and younger, one often finds: feeding difficulties; refusal to take naps or go to bed at regular hours; disobedience and defiance; difficulty in getting on with other children, as seen in domineering, selfishness with possessions, teasing and annoying others, or quarreling and fighting. At the other extreme there may be lack of initiative, shyness and timidity, and failure to stand up for oneself. Often there is difficulty over bed-wetting, masturbation, and other habits associated with unwholesome sex adjustment. Then there are difficulties usually thought of as problems of personality, but directly affecting one's ability to get on with others; such as temper; stubbornness, and resistance ("negativism"); sulking and whining; restlessness, tenseness, and overactivity; too great dependence on adults, and so on.

Replies from 5,463 parents indicated that the fifteen most frequent difficulties with primary children were:

slow in dressing, stubborn, argues, slow to obey, nervous, impatient, fears dark, hates to go to bed, teases, careless, refuses to take naps, thoughtless about duties, excitable, whines, or is selfish.[1]

From the teacher's point of view, some of the more common behavior problems in elementary schools are: whispering, inattentive, careless in work, tattling, disorderly in class, interrupting, failure to study, shy and withdrawing, daydreaming, lack of interest, overactive, cheating, oversensitive, neglectful, physically lazy, lying, unnecessary tardiness, acting "smart," overcritical, imaginative tales, meddlesome, sullen, domineering, slovenly appearance.[2]

As children grow older, kinds of behavior which frequently lead toward delinquency are such as: stealing, destruction of property, irregular sex behavior, running away from home, truancy from school, fighting and bullying, and so on.

Character

As you think over the children making up your group doubtless you will recall a generous list of just such difficulties. When you begin to know children in action, you discover that each one in his own way is having difficulties, somewhere, in becoming a worthy member of society.

One of your major goals in teaching touches life at

[1] From *Character Education,* Part Two, p. 17. Copyright, 1929; by permission of the authors, C. E. Germane and E. G. Germane, and the publisher, Silver, Burdett Company.

[2] Wickman, E. K., *Children's Behavior and Teacher's Attitudes,* p. 30. Commonwealth Fund, 1929.

just that point. The Christian teacher wishes to help children achieve Christian character. "Character" refers to the kind of self one is, in his relations with people. Behavior difficulties such as those mentioned, stand in the way of achieving effective character, for one's character is his Self functioning in society. That society is first of all the people with whom a child is personally associated, at home, at play, in church, and at school. But it broadens until it takes in every group of which one is a member. Even a little child is a citizen of the world.

To be a *Christian* character has some especially significant meanings. Perhaps no one of us is capable even of seeing them all, much less of naming them briefly and yet truly. But among many, these three stand out. One is not Christian except in so far as he is Christian in his relations with others. The Christianness of one's relations is to be judged by the effects of his total Self upon others, whether through personality, speech, acts, or whatever else he is and does. The basis for that judgment is the highest form of self-regard of which one is capable; nowhere has it been so aptly put as in the Golden Rule.

These principles point to the general method for development of Christian character. Since character is social, its nurture should be in a social setting. Broadly speaking, and with children especially in mind, Christian character is best developed by living under circumstances where adults take the initiative in creating a Christian society, as in home, church, community, or any other group. In that society children learn by participating as

members who are responsible up to the level of their capacity. Where this is being done, adults are learning, growing, just as truly as children are. It is a shared enterprise, a "fellowship." But by the very nature of life, adults must take the lead in this fellowship, because if we are to have a planned society, adults must provide it.

But character, though social, is also inward. It has not been achieved at its best until the control of self is from within and not from without. So long as the control is external, whether it be from family, school, church, or any other group, one has not become a fully self-determining unit in society. He has not yet arrived at maturity of character, but still is a pawn moved by other wills than his own, and by forces outside himself.

In all dealing with children where character is a goal one is wise to turn over the government as rapidly as possible to the new self which is forming in a child. This cannot be successfully done all at once. It is a slow process, full of risk. But perhaps there is no human tragedy greater than is seen in those persons in whom it has never begun to happen, unless it be those who have run wild because they were suddenly given a freedom which they did not know how to use, never having had the experience of genuine self-control.

So we should consider the bases of character, keeping in view all the while the need for outward controls to give way to inner ones.

The Bases of Character

Each subject considered in previous chapters has to do, in some sense, with the bases of character. The

family is the first society into which a child is born; whatever measure of Christianness has been achieved there, writes itself into the foundations of character. A child's own individual equipment provides the basis for what he is capable of becoming. His values and aversions are the body of emotional leanings either toward or away from the great goals of Christian living. His learning of responses, knowledge, and insights constitutes the sum of the detailed adjustments by which he responds to the society in which he lives. His comprehension and use of speech govern the extent to which he can understand the rich language of the Christian Church, respond to meanings which others express, and grasp the Christian meaning of his social experience. In the degree to which he is healthful in personality he is better able to live wholesomely with other people as his contacts broaden.

But the bases of character need to be considered with the question specifically in mind, What promotes growth of character? Accordingly, we shall examine five *bases for growth* of character. These cannot be sharply separated, and other arrangements are possible, but probably they are best considered in this order: (1) Satisfying human relations, (2) Enlarging knowledge and insight, (3) Degree of maturity, (4) A growing moral self, and (5) Social participation.

Satisfying Human Relations

Probably the first basis, in any case an essential basis, for character growth is satisfying human relations. Look at this first from the point of view of persons who

are having major crises in achieving character, and who appear to be failing.

Being Rejected. Suppose, once more, that you are the child failing in school, described in the last chapter. Can you stretch imagination one impossible step further? Not only are you a failure at school, but the home situation is equally unbearable. Affection from parents is lacking, or perhaps the family is broken. You get abuse instead of love and emotional support at home. Is it possible that you might find some way to make a hero of yourself, in the eyes of an entirely different group, and at any cost?

That is what happens in many children who are called "delinquent." Healy and Bronner studied the histories of 105 delinquent boys and girls, and matched these with the histories of an equal number of nondelinquents. As often as possible, a delinquent and a nondelinquent were taken from the same family.

These authors report that 91 per cent of the delinquents were, or previously had been, "very unhappy and discontented in their life circumstances or extremely disturbed because of emotion-provoking situations or experiences."[3] For example, they felt "rejected, deprived, insecure, not understood"; or thwarted; or inadequate and inferior; or suffered intense discomfort because of disharmony or misconduct in their family; or were jealous; or had internal mental conflict; or labored under a sense of guilt after previous conduct.[4] This is quite the

[3] Healy, W., and Bronner, A. F., *New Light on Delinquency and Its Treatment*, p. 122. Yale University Press, 1936.

[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 128, 129.

same kind of conditions which we earlier called threats to self-realization. By contrast, only 13 per cent of the nondelinquents were under similar stress.

Facing such conditions, and unable to find a way to meet them, these boys and girls began to run away from home, or be truant from school, or steal, or become gang leaders, or consort with crooks, or search for the affection denied them everywhere else, by engaging in illicit sexual relations. Rejected in their first and normal world of home and school, they sought for another world in which they believed they could thrive.

Rebuilding Character. The methods used for the rebuilding of these characters are very significant. Wherever possible, effort was made to help members of a family remedy the faulty relationships with a child who had become delinquent, so that in family life a child might find satisfaction for his fundamental wishes for recognition, response, and so on. In nearly every case where parents were willing to co-operate and to reconstruct their own attitudes toward a child and their relationships with him, delinquency ceased. When delinquents came from families in which this reconstruction was impossible, frequently the children were placed in foster homes; and finding themselves accepted in this foster-relationship, many of the children ceased being delinquent. It is almost as if character, in these children, were a barometer to indicate the degree of satisfaction found in their human relationships.

In Family Life. When we consider the character of children who are growing up in the midst of wholesome family life, the contrast with the delinquents is striking.

We might cite studies which others have made, but your own common-sense observation is probably the most convincing evidence you could have. Recall the children of your acquaintance who are the most wholesome in personality and in character achievement. Then recall the homes in which these children live. Whatever else may help to account for it, you will probably recognize that these children find enriching satisfaction in relations with the people of their family group.

In School. In school, as in family life, children's character reflects the nature of the personal relationships. This was strikingly shown in the results of the Character Education Inquiry. Hartshorne and May, studying deceit, found that the children of some schoolrooms tended to be honest as a group, when in that room; while children of other rooms readily seized opportunities to cheat. The rooms in which the behavior of the group was honest, were ones in which a relationship of co-operation and good will existed between teacher and pupils; while in the contrasted rooms this was not the case.[5]

In church, satisfying relationships have the same kind of effect on children's character. In Chapter V the story of the boys who went out the window is an example. Under teachers whom they disliked, behavior problems were to the fore, but with a teacher whom they came to trust, an entirely different range of conduct was drawn forth.

In similar manner we might trace a child's place in all the groups of which he is a member. We might show

[5] Hartshorne, H., and May, M. A., *Studies in Deceit,* pp. 324-29, 411. The Macmillan Company, 1929.

that his conduct in each contributes toward the goals held by that group in its living, in something like direct proportion to the satisfaction he finds in his relations with the people of that group. By contrast we might show that when his relations with the persons of any group leave him feeling deprived, rejected, thwarted, he then does not truly desire the same goals as they, for he is not emotionally one with them, and his conduct does not pull in the same direction as theirs.

Consistency. But this very fact brings us to face a major difficulty in the growth of Christian character. The codes of the different groups in which a child finds satisfying relationships may not be the same. As Hartshorne puts it, "Many a boy has three vocabularies, one for the Sunday school, one for the dinner table, and one for the alley, and he never mixes them. Probably, also, he has many different codes of morals, depending upon the groups with which he is associated and upon the general social situations surrounding him."[6]

Thus, if character has no basis but this for its growth, it may turn out that a child shows no consistency in his behavior. After the Character Education Inquiry, Hartshorne and May say this is precisely the case with American children. "The average child of grades 5 to 8 is chiefly a creature of circumstances. Whether his conduct happens to be good or bad, it is ethically unorganized."[7] So, satisfying human relations, essential though

[6] Hartshorne, H., *Character in Human Relations,* pp. 213-14. Charles Scribner's Sons, 1932.

[7] *Studies in the Organization of Character,* p. 374. The Macmillan Company, 1930.

they are as an early basis of character growth, are not enough to nourish Christian character at its best.

Enlarging Knowledge and Insight

Another needed basis for character growth is knowledge. It is obvious that a child cannot bring his conduct into harmony with what his group expects, unless he knows what the code is.

The Functional Code. It is important for adults to remember that the actual codes which function as guides in our living, are highly specific. A child has to learn a mass of very precise details regarding what is approved and what is not. Examples are everywhere.

For instance, a child is urged to feed himself, and all he wishes is given him from the table. But if he goes to the refrigerator and feeds himself, the act is sternly disapproved.

Too, he learns that many things about the house have mysterious prohibitions surrounding them. Some objects his mother hands him, and he can play with these as he wishes. Others he cannot even touch, much less use in play. One by one, he must learn where the line is drawn.

The rules regarding money seem especially difficult to get hold of. His mother will place money in his hand, and he may use it as he wishes. He puts it on a box or table, and he may go and get it. But other money around the house, which has not passed through his hand, he must let strictly alone. He will wrestle many a day with the niceties of the money code.

He goes to school, and on every hand is urged toward

co-operation and helpfulness. In time he begins to be one of a group having written tests. His neighbor is helpless before some part of the test. "Why, I'll help him," perhaps he thinks—and then the heavy hand of the school descends on him.

If illustrations of this kind filled a book, the point would be the same: A child's acts which adults consider right or wrong, have to be considered and learned one at a time. They are exceedingly specific.

And until the age of nine or thereabouts, it appears that a child naturally thinks in specific terms, concrete and definite. So, if we are patient to interpret the moral code step by step, particular by particular, we shall be working in line with the nature of the actual code itself, and with the nature of children's thinking as well.

The Standards of Judgment. A child will be forever asking, "Why?" when he is confronted with our expectation that this shall be done and that not. He needs to be acquainted with what lies behind our expectation.

Many of these acts belong in the class of "folkways," things which people in our part of the world just do that way, or not, as the case may be. They cannot be called right or wrong in any ordinary moral meaning of the words. Most of our customs at table and most of our fashions in dress, for example, are of this kind. They are part of character in the rather secondary and yet significant sense that one's observance of the folkways helps him to maintain a self which his fellows will accept, as "belonging" in the group.

Beyond these lies the great body of acts which we call right or wrong. But by what standards is a thing so

judged? Children will wish to know; and our answers must be in simple terms, yet true to the greatest principles which we know. But what principles?

Christian teachers often resort to either of two principles, both of which are gravely abused in much actual dealing with children. One is to tell children, with no comment, that God wishes or commands thus and so. Other forms of this are to say, "God will be angry if you do not," or "God will not love you if you do this," or "Jesus will be sorry," and the like. This barren, curselike invoking of supposed divine sanctions is the device used by many desperate parents and teachers, in trying to control difficult behavior. The acts going on at the moment are seldom affected greatly, but the net result frequently is to leave children with the conception of an arbitrary and rather picayunish God, leagued with an adult of the same caliber.

Another is to assert, with no explanation, "The Bible says so." Frequently this is coupled with the notion that if only one can find chapter and verse to support a point of morals, no more need be said, regardless of time and setting. No doubt this does leave a child with the intended assumption that the Bible is the final authority in question of morals, but it gives him no insight into the reasons why so great a portion of mankind believes thus.

Any statement of a Christian basis of judgment upon human acts must surely be rooted in the spirit of the teachings of Jesus. And where is that so clearly expressed as in the second great commandment, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself"? Upon this and its companion first and great commandment, "hang all the

law and the prophets." Easy to say, but how immensely difficult even to see in its full meaning, and how much more so to live! But with love, in its full New Testament meaning, as a point of reference for all human acts and motives, children can be led to searching tests of themselves and their world. Through their eyes we shall often see the evil in what our custom-crusted eyes might take for granted, and with children we may again discern the outlines of a City of God, such as we saw in youth and may nearly have forgotten to strive for.

This Christian standard of love, in its rich New Testament sense, is an ever-advancing goal. No man yet may say he has grasped all that love in human relations might mean. But repeatedly there is some fresh unveiling of its meaning, through just such persons as you teach. Through a quiet Woolman, men got new insight into its meaning for slaveowners. Through a Kagawa, most unlikely of boys, both East and West began wistfully to see a co-operative economic order take some tangible form. And who shall say through what child from such groups as yours our times may see a way to emerge from the threat of world-engulfing dictatorships, into the fuller freedom of children of God in the kingdom of God?

The Limitations of Knowledge. Teaching for Christian character such as we here have in view will certainly have its core of solid "content," drawn primarily from the Bible. But we must use it with frank recognition of the severe limitations of knowledge alone. Moral knowledge does not assure corresponding moral conduct. One might suppose all teachers would take that for granted,

yet one has only to recall the great number of church schools content to have pupils memorize and repeat Biblical passages regarding desired conduct. Careful tests in increasing number, and ordinary observation as well, make it plain that teaching children the words about Christian conduct furnishes no guarantee whatever that such conduct will characterize the children who have faithfully learned the words. We must have still further bases for the growth of Christian character.

Degree of Maturity

The degree of maturity which a child has attained is another basis for character growth. There are processes of inner maturing which need to be taken into account, so that we shall not expect character achievements of a child at a time when they may still be beyond his capacity. Consider illustrations from three aspects of growth.

From Imagination to Realism. When a child is young, he is likely to attribute consciousness to things in a way quite foreign to adult habits of thought. Piaget holds there are definite stages in this process. In the first stage, all things seem to a child to be conscious. In the second, things that move seem to him conscious. In the third, things that move of their own accord appear to him to be conscious; and in the fourth, only animals are regarded as conscious.[8]

He may play with imaginary companions, as one little girl did with "Bodybo," "Kriekerkro," and "the Bussies," all having distinct personalities which she de-

[8] Piaget, J., *The Child's Conception of the World,* Chap. V. Harcourt, Brace, 1929.

scribed consistently. He may engage in imaginative play by the hour, constructing a whole world known fully only by himself.

During earlier years when lively imagination flourishes, a child probably senses no sharp distinction, like we do, between "fact" and "fancy." We urge him to "tell the truth," but many quite young children do not understand what we are driving at! The guidance into habits of telling only what is true as truth, and of labeling what is fancy, will not be relaxed; but the adult will understand that a little child's mind does not yet deal with such things as an older person's does.

But the time does come when a child begins, himself, to ask, "Is it really true?" In later childhood especially, he may pass into a period which Professor Norman E. Richardson has aptly called "the age of hardpan," when he will stickle by the hour if permitted, over some fine point in a statement, until he has nailed the thing to earth. As such habits of thought begin to appear, the teaching regarding truth-telling can fit neatly into a child's own modes of thinking.

Growth of Mental Abilities. As he grows, a child of usual intelligence will become better able to discriminate between the significance of various acts. He is growing in his ability to see likenesses and differences. Distinct advance in this regard may ordinarily be expected at about the end of the Primary work and the beginning of the Junior. This growing ability is of great importance in character development, because it permits a child more readily to grasp the distinctions in moral behavior.

A child can also be helped to form the habit of trying

to foresee the consequences of a choice, when several possible choices are open. Jane Addams traced a large part of her convictions regarding social justice to her father, who seems to have encouraged this habit of thought. At the age of eight a new cloak was given her. Proud of it, she put it on for church, and went to show it to her father. He remarked upon its beauty—but no other girl at church would have one like it; would she not better wear the old one to keep warm, and not make the other girls feel bad? She complied, but continued to ponder this problem of inequality. Another talk with the father—what could be done about it? He answered that it might not ever be put right in matters like clothes, but people could be equal in things of far greater importance.[9]

Again, as we saw in Chapter VII, a child is growing in his ability to handle general ideas—"concepts." This too is significant for character growth, for particular problems of conduct need to be set in classes, like truthful and untruthful, honest and dishonest, and so on. Children of about Junior age will ordinarily be able to handle these general terms much more readily than younger children can. The general ideas still need to be kept full of concrete details, but *mentally* a child is coming to the place where he need not be tied solely to a consideration of specific acts.

Self-assertion. A third aspect of a child's maturing which needs constantly to be kept in view, is his self-assertion.

[9] Eastman, F., in *Pilgrim Elementary Teacher,* XXI, p. 187. May, 1937.

It is a natural process. Just as his body struggled to be born physically from the body of his mother, so his Self must struggle for the right to be a separate individual not dominated and controlled by others. The speech of a young child is a symptom of this struggle to become a self. Many scientific observers of children's behavior have commented on the extent to which a kindergarten child's speech is "egocentric"—centered upon himself. "I" and "mine" bulk very large in his thinking, and hence in his speech, as he tries to become an individual instead of an indistinct part of a social mass.

Inevitably this leads to conflict with others. If you rethink the behavior difficulties of young children, you will see how large a part of these grow out of the fact that a child is trying in a crude way to achieve the right to decide his own acts. Often, and perhaps generally, he is grossly inconsiderate of the rights of others. Certainly, one is very far from Christian character so long as this is true. And yet in our eagerness to have a child become a worthy social self, we must not forget that this is never possible until he has achieved a Self to govern!

Teachers of children, and especially of boys, often need to see children's particular acts in light of this inward necessity. In Chapter III we referred to the frequency of aggressive behavior in boys. This, and other forms of self-assertion in children, are troublesome from the teacher's point of view, upset school routine, and are marked down when grades are given for conduct. Further, if the teacher is a woman, assertive and aggressive behavior probably violate her standards, as a woman, of what a child's conduct should be.

But Wickman points to certain facts in this connection which no teacher has the right to ignore. Many of the aggressive acts which a teacher deplores are ranked by mental hygienists as desirable from the angle of mental health, since they show that a child has "spunk" enough to pit himself against his surroundings. And, on the contrary, many kinds of behavior which a teacher rates high and calls good conduct are seen by the mental hygienist in a very different light, since they may mean a child is so compliant as to have no will of his own.[10]

The Growth of a Moral Self

Each basis of character growth which we have considered has led us to see a developing child, with competing demands made upon him by his world, and with an enlarging capacity for character. But each one has also left us asking, "How does a self develop to the place where one governs himself consistently and in the light of great spiritual principles?"

It may be we shall see our answer by observing four possible stages of moral growth. Seeing these, perhaps we shall be able better to discern how the Christian teacher may help a child not to be arrested at a low stage in this kind of growth, but, rather, to advance toward its highest stage.

"I ought." A child soon comes to feel "I ought," regarding the code by which his group tells him he should live, and "I ought not," regarding the things forbidden in that code. Especially is this likely to be the case if he

[10] Wickman, *op. cit.*

has been instructed at home, and if his adults show feeling about the matters which they teach him are right and wrong.

But if a child develops no further than to feel "I ought," and "I ought not," two results are very common. One is that he can talk about the things he should and should not do, but his actual behavior is governed by other motives. He responds to the demands of the situation as it is around him, not to any inner demands upon himself. He will do what he is told he should, if it pleases him or is required of him. But on other occasions, when it does not suit him or when a different group makes other demands upon him, he acts in accordance with desire or pressure.

The other result is that, if in later life one lives by different standards, he often continues to carry his parents' conscience within himself as an accuser. Has not the fact impressed you that so many persons defend themselves against the idea that the father or mother would not approve what is now being done? Religious people often regard this as a sign of effective teaching in childhood. It is equally open to regard it as a sign of failure. For such individuals have only conviction enough about what is wrong to make them uncomfortable in doing it, but not conviction enough about what is right to turn them toward it.

Thus the feeling of "I ought" is an incomplete stage in moral growth. It is a beginning, for by this feeling the group's highest standards may begin to be registered within the growing self. But it lacks the power of inward attraction.

"I want" furnishes that attraction. It is the feeling of desire for action which one can choose as his own. When one acts from that motive, he has the "my" feeling about the thing he is doing. No one need stand over him telling him "You ought," for this is the thing he wants to do.

This warm "my" feeling or sense of value in regard to conduct seems to come about through a child's admirations more than in any other way. The persons whom he knows make concrete to him the many qualities of character which are possible in human life. These can be people whom he sees, or hears of, or reads about. At times a child attempts a rather wholesale imitation of this or that person, fireman, policeman, G-man, or who not. But gradually the portrait of the self a child means to be, comes to have in it the marks of many different individuals, from whom he takes bits here and there and blends them into his conception of his own ideal self. And if we ask why he chooses just this or that element to put into the portrait of his ideal self, perhaps there is no better answer than to say *he picks outstanding qualities in the people who seem to be getting the most out of life, in terms which the child counts worth while.*

At first sight this may seem to be reasoning in a circle; it looks like saying that a child absorbs into himself the qualities of character seen in persons who make more concrete the values which he already holds. To some extent this is true, but there is vastly more. For verbal teaching may help to create insight into new possible values, and then new acquaintances may make those new values real and appealing.

How important it is, then, that religion should appeal to children through actual characters in whom goodness is winsome! Radiant righteousness in living does for growing persons coming under its influence, what no lectures and lessons on right conduct can ever do. After Grenfell had been describing his life in Labrador, a woman reached him, and began to say, "Oh, I feel so sorry for you, having to suffer such hardships"—but before she could go further, he drew himself up as if struck; then smiled, and said: "But, madam, you don't understand. I'm having the time of my life." That attitude toward one's own living, more than any other, turns the tide of a child's admiration toward a character, making him wish to be that kind of person.

"I will" is the choice and determination to be a certain kind of person. Here, one may believe, lies the opening of the way toward consistency of character.

From your own childhood you probably can recall times of reaching such determination, so that you felt the inward demand to say "No" even under pressure, or to decide "Yes" when there was little encouragement. You can repeatedly see it too in children under your own observation. A child, for example, refuses to cheat when others cheat; or admits his part in some escapade when he could lie and escape; or refuses to be drawn into some dubious venture with his comrades.

The determination to pursue a course of action which a child believes is right, often arises out of his purpose to be a certain kind of person. Healy and Bronner sought to learn why some children had not become delinquent when a brother or sister living in the same outward sur-

roundings had fallen afoul of social customs and finally of civil law. These boys' and girls' own explanations could not reveal all the reasons why they had remained steadfast under pressure, but they did often show this inward purpose.

They said, for example, such things as these: "I want to make something of myself;" "I wanted to get ahead in the world;" "I had courage to refuse to go with bad boys;" "In a bad crowd I can say no;" "I played with the same boys, but they couldn't talk me into crooking;" "I want to be a priest;" "I want to be a missionary;" and the like. One, recalling his boyhood, said, "I would do anything for my mother. My home meant more to me than anything else. With my father just as good as on the ash heap it was up to me to look after her."[11]

In this connection too we should see the signal opportunity which the Church has at the time of a child's public commitment to Christ. This opportunity is not always fully utilized, and sometimes hardly used at all; for often a church will do no more than insist that a child should "yield himself" in his acceptance of Christ as Saviour. The whole conception easily becomes a purely passive one. Faith in one of its great aspects certainly does mean the surrender of the self to Another, in complete trust. And yet is it not the kind of surrender which places one under obedience to this publicly acknowledged loyalty? It is an enlistment, to do and be something, and not merely to "accept" something. The ancient Church had this conception in a clear-cut form. In the

[11] Healy and Bronner, *op. cit.*, pp. 88-9.

formula of public profession one said, "I enlist with Thee, O Christ." That being so, the Church could and did expect, indeed demand, that character should be in harmony with one's profession.

We owe it to children to point out that public enlistment is a time when one should make clear to himself the kind of person he means to be. It is a time for forming these inner resolves of "I will." And surely we shall seek to help him see that a Christian's "I will" looks toward becoming a person who makes love the governing principle in all living.

"I must" represents a stage in the growth of a moral self when all the driving power of a personality is behind one's desire for and choice of a course of action consistent with a governing principle. One sets out to achieve the goal, at any cost, and sustains the endeavor over long periods of time. It indicates the ripe moral maturity of the spiritually great. Yet it is not confined to those who are mature in years, and certainly not to those who have won renown.

A child is moving in that direction when his philosophy of life is taking definite form, as it frequently does in later childhood; and when he lives by that philosophy through vicissitudes which exert great pressure upon him to be a different kind of person.

And that philosophy of life by which a child means to live, may crystallize quickly as a result of some conversation or teaching hour in which you have helped him to see clearly the "highroad and the road" which open to us every one. One boy describes how this came about within him, just as he was leaving childhood. "I used

to grab things when I was a little kid, eleven or twelve. Then I met a fellow up in the country; he was a hard worker; we used to talk things over in the evenings, but he wasn't preachy. Always he used to say, 'You never get anything for nothing; even a thief works hard but in a wrong way.' This turned me; what he said stuck by me."[12]

Social Participation

For the development of Christian character, it is of the greatest importance that a child should participate as a responsible member, in group-living where the relationships are Christian and where goals worthy of Christian effort are actually being achieved. But, just as we did with the question of personal relationships when we considered the subject of health of personality, so here also we shall hold over the discussion of the topic until the final chapter, in order to see it in a still wider setting.

Suggestions for Discussion

1. Briefly discuss the meaning of "character," so as to bring out (a) its social nature; (b) its inner nature; (c) the necessity of nurturing character in a social setting; (d) and the necessity of replacing outward control by inward control.

2. When is character Christian?

3. Have the group mention a few instances of children who are wholesome in character, keeping them anonymous if preferred. Describe the home situation, especially seeking to discover to what extent these children find the personal relationships at home satisfying. Do the same with a few instances of children who present distinctive problems

[12] Healy and Bronner, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

of behavior. Do the results of this discussion seem to justify the general statement that a child's character indicates the degree of satisfaction found in his human relationships? Help the group to think of "behavior problems" as being a symptom of some lack of satisfaction in these relationships. Help them, further, to see that the rebuilding of character ordinarily depends on building up or rebuilding human relationships, so that these bring deep inward satisfaction.

4. Bring out both the necessity and the limitations of "knowledge," in the building of Christian character. Be sure that the group sees (a) what this means in reference to the teaching of "content" in Christian education, and (b) the vital importance of orienting all Biblical content by the spirit and teaching of Jesus.

5. Lead the group to recognize limitations in character development due to lack of maturity, in the three aspects discussed in this chapter. But be sure also that they recognize the need for *growth* in these respects. Connect the tendency to self-assertion with a child's need for inner instead of outward control.

6. Consider the four suggested stages in the growth of a moral self, taking care that the group recognizes these in living children, and stressing the need to progress at least as far as "I will," if a child is to be consistent in character, with inward control of self. Give especial attention to consideration of ways in which a teacher may help such growth of character to take place, by encouraging children to assume and discharge responsibility.

"My Friend"

9. In the first section of your paper you considered the family setting in which your friend lives. Go over that again in mind, then ask yourself: (a) Is his character an indication of the degree of satisfaction, or lack of it, which he finds in the family relationships? (b) What needs does

he have in human relationships which you might help in supplying? (c) In what respects is his character development mature and in what respects immature, for his age? (d) How can you best help him to reach a more advanced stage of character growth?

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CHAPTER X

GROWTH THROUGH CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

"FELLOWSHIP" is one of the richest conceptions in the New Testament. Frequently it is translated "communion," but basically the word refers to "sharing." At times it means a sharing with one another in any or all of the good things of life, whether bread or joy. Again, it will mean a sharing in the good gifts brought to men by Christ. Still again, it will point to our two-way sharing with God, He taking our sin and hurt upon Himself, we putting ourselves into harmony with His will and being renewed and replenished by partaking of His infinite riches of grace. Then "fellowship" comes to mean a spirit which characterizes a group who are in right relations with one another and with God; and such a fellowship becomes the embodiment of the Spirit of God, because love is actually at work within it. The idea of "Christian fellowship" is an almost incredibly fertile one as shown in the New Testament.

In modern education there is a conception surprisingly like that of the New Testament in some respects, for we are often reminded that growth takes place best in an area of shared experience. Psychologically, this involves the same basic ideas as to the meaning of human experience as are found in the New Testament. Religiously, it is only a half-way house until the divine Be-

ing and His activity among men are brought into the conception.

Whichever way we have turned in this study, we have come sooner or later to face the child's fundamental need for creative and enriching relations with others. Now *we should see that the kind of relationships which a child psychologically needs for his growth in personality and character is the very kind of relationships which should exist in and be produced by Christian fellowship.*

So we shall gather up some of the strands of thought which we left incomplete in earlier chapters, and we shall seek to carry them further in this setting of the idea of Christian fellowship as the area in which the best Christian growth can take place.

Creative Relationships

Creativeness in a Relationship. A satisfying relation between adult and child is creative, for it tends to bring out the latent capacities of a child. This is of the greatest significance in dealing with children; but we have considered it so frequently in previous chapters, that we need only to mention it here. Better learning of all types, better comprehension of those ideas of God which embody concepts drawn from human relations, the sense of emotional security, and conduct which shows regard for others—all come about more readily when a child is responding in a relationship with an adult in whom he has complete confidence.

A child's first need is that these wholesome relationships should exist within his own family, and especially with his parents, for we have seen how deeply the family

relationships color and shape the personality and character. When this need is well met within the family, the Christian teacher can build upon secure family foundations.

But we must suppose that few families meet this need completely. Some will approach very near to it, others will fail entirely, while still others will "miss the mark" in some important particulars. Children may love and admire their parents, and yet feel certain distinct lacks. The Germanes, working with the leaders of the Parent-Teachers' Association in a small city, asked several hundred children to write themes upon three subjects: "What I wish my Daddy would not do and say;" "What my Daddy and I do that I like very much;" and, "What I wish my Daddy would say and do more often." When the themes on the first subject were analyzed and presented to the fathers, "the one striking inference that the fathers were compelled to make was that their own children were literally starving for the companionship of their fathers." The themes on the second subject almost universally showed appreciation of the parents' companionship; they "simply glowed with remembered thrills of hiking and fishing and camping trips which had been experienced with their fathers." And the themes on the third subject "point unmistakably in one direction. It is as if the children arose in a body and cried, 'Daddy, won't you take time for me?' "[1]

We may well question whether a church teacher can

[1] From *Character Education*, pp. 203, 204, 207. Copyright, 1929; by permission of the authors, C. E. Germane and E. G. Germane, and the publisher, Silver, Burdett Company.

ever provide a substitute for family relationships which are defective. But is it not possible that he may supplement the family relationships, and perhaps even provide wholesome compensations for some lacks in family relationships? Certainly, in any group of children one is likely to meet some need for reconstruction within the personality or character of a child. And how shall the change be brought about?

Reconstruction Through a Relationship. Among careful students of children, the view is coming to prevail that when a child's personality or character is twisted or maimed, two facts should stand out clearly and govern us in dealing with that child.

The first is that in all probability he became that way because his relationships with others were not fundamentally satisfying. The cases mentioned in Chapter VIII, and the work of Healy and Bronner, cited in Chapter IX, have served to show how the defective relationships with other people may issue in distorted personality or undesirable character.

The second is that if personality or character is to be reconstructed, ordinarily this must take place within a relationship which supplies something of what was lacking. Personality and character may often be made whole within and by a relationship with an adult in which confidence, trust, and affection exist.

To cite Healy and Bronner once more, we have seen that when a delinquent's relationship with his family could be made wholesome, character was changed; when this was impossible, a satisfying relationship with a foster family frequently brought the same results. Doctor

Taft's work with children, where the problems were somewhat more in the realm of personality, shows the same kind of results. When the "problem child" came to feel confidence and trust in the adult the personality problems tended to grow less or even to disappear.[2]

This reconstruction of personality and character, when a child trusts an adult and lets himself go in affectionate response, is remarkably like a thing that was constantly happening when Jesus was among men. Broken in personality, character, or body, they came to know Him, felt utter confidence in Him, trusted Him without any reserve. This attitude is known in the New Testament by the name of "faith"—and that faith in Him healed men; "Thy faith hath made thee whole," He often said.

The meaning for the church teacher surely will be obvious. A child, to be whole in personality and character, needs this very same faith in our Lord, this confidence and trust which persons felt in the days of His flesh. And an imperative prelude to and a foundation for that faith, is a kindred faith in one or more adults whom a child can see and know. If we shrink from recognizing that a child's faith in some adult is a gateway into the greater redeeming faith in God, we are driven back to that recognition when we see that a child's lack of faith in his adults is one of the surest ways to mar or break his personality and character.

As a means to the establishment of this desired relationship, it is of the greatest value for adults and children to work together in undertakings which are of

[2] Taft, J., *Dynamics of Therapy in a Controlled Relationship*. The Macmillan Company, 1933.

common interest. Common sense, tact, and the ability to treat children as persons are imperative; but given these, *doing* things together ushers one into a reality of fellowship between older and younger, which can hardly be achieved in any other way.

Fellowship in Christian Groups

If a child's first need is at least one adult with whom his relationships can be fundamentally satisfying, his next need is group life of that same kind. Repeatedly we have sought to show that this should come to a child through his experience as a member of the family, but equally truly he needs group life which takes in persons beyond his family.

The church should be an area where a child has the experience of group life that is Christian. If his family has first brought him the experience of Christian group-life, the church then expands that experience. If he has not known it in the family, it may be he will find in a church, for the first time, what it is to live with a group in a Christian way. This Christian group-life should characterize his age-group, his department, and whatever other groupings he may enter.

There is grave danger of idealization and pious cant here. We may be tempted to suppose that what happens to children in a church is good for them just because it happens in a church. We may be disposed to regard what we are already doing in a church as being fully Christian. We may even suppose that constant mention of the Bible, of frequent use of the divine names, brings goodness into acts which otherwise would be insuffer-

able. Of course no one of these is necessarily so. Neither boredom nor wild disorder is made any better for a child just by its taking place in a church. Crude and ineffective teaching is not made a virtue by the mere fact that it deals with holy things. The perpetual use of the name of Christ brings no assurance that His Spirit characterizes our dealings with one another.

But a child does truly need the church in proportion as all relationships between the people in his church are Christian in spirit, and the relationships of its people with God are genuine and rich. For then he begins to be a partaker in living which is Christian in deed and not only in word.

Further, in such a group, if it is truly Christian, he will find acceptance as a person and feel that he has worth. Jane Nelson, of whom we spoke in Chapter VIII, urgently needed that experience; but at the very time when her need was greatest her church group was not equal to the demand. The Christianness of any group is tested similarly when a poorly dressed child comes among children with expensive clothes; when a black child comes among those who are white; when a child who has done wrong enters a group who regard themselves as good; or when a child with some peculiarity seeks a place among children who have no distinguishing marks. But if the group accepts them as persons in their own right, that act will frequently be a significant factor in the building of a Christian self in a child whom the church might otherwise literally help to destroy.

Without that acceptance it is easier for a child to feel

discouraged or defeated. Much more readily a general sense of guilt may begin to grow and attach itself to relatively unimportant matters until they are seen out of all proportion and brooded upon. Professor H. R. Mackintosh has pointed out that the Christian's sense of forgiveness before God needs to be validated by his experience of forgiveness in the relations with his own human kind within the church,[3] and this is so with children. A child who is constantly made to feel not wanted, condemned, pushed out of the center of things in human living, is getting a wretched background of experience with which to understand God's forgiveness, and this is especially true if the lack is felt within his church.

The emotional life of a child responds readily to genuinely Christian group living. When he feels at home with his group, accepted as a part of it, sharing in its decisions and acts, contributing to its well-being, and partaking in its satisfactions, his feelings and emotions spontaneously become expansive.

And observe that it is the frank and open purpose of our religion to cultivate just such states of mind and to direct them toward God. The "fruits of the Spirit," for example, are to a large extent attitudes of inner being—joy, peace, gratitude, thankfulness, hopefulness, and the like. The "blessedness" of the Beatitudes literally means happiness. These and their kind are an immensely rich array of feeling states which build up the whole self.

A child's fellowship with a truly Christian group helps

[3] Mackintosh, H. R., *The Christian Experience of Forgiveness*, p. 283f. Harper & Brothers, 1927.

to bring about these things within him. In this, too, a fundamental need is met. One is turned away from fear, hatred and anger, malice and spite, which tear down the very cells of the body, and is turned the more toward love and faith which make one whole in mind and body.

Social Participation

Within an Integrated Group. In Chapter IX we saw that the bases for character growth are not complete until it is possible for a child to participate as a member of a Christian group, responsible right along with others for the thinking and action of the group. We are brought to see that necessity, further, by all that we have considered in this chapter. For participation in the feelings and emotions of a group is needed in order to help center the emotional life of the members of the group upon God as the supreme Object of our love and trust; and yet this is not complete until it has led us to action. Indeed, the deep satisfaction of love and trust toward God is in danger of being a selfish spiritual luxury, unless it issues in doing.

And when we speak here of "social participation," we are thinking particularly of taking part in this doing, this action, of a group consciously seeking to make its living Christian. By this participation, a growing moral self, committed to Christ as Lord, is led into sharing with others of like mind, in seeking a Christian way of meeting the problems of living.

This is very different from saying that in a church group a child participates in perfect Christian living. Very far from it, for there are no groups where this

could be so. But under wise leadership he may participate with a Christian group who are deliberately seeking to make their living what it might be when love governs. In so far as that principle controls child or man, it may truly be said that character is being integrated; *and in a genuinely Christian group, a child has the experience of taking a responsible part in living which moves in that direction.*

Much of the living within the group itself, perhaps, is not yet Christian in spirit and act; while surrounding any group of children are areas of living that are distinctly unchristian; so that within and without the group, unchristianness presses in threateningly. But children may learn in group living within the church to regard those very areas as challenges, and to drive shafts of co-operative Christian attempts at solution into the unmined veins of pagan or half-Christian living which surround them and crop up within their own group.

The Sense of Problem. If this is to be so, children must very early learn to regard a baffling problem as a possible prelude to a richer discovery of what Christian living may be. And teachers, in turn, will then regard children's felt problems in living, their perplexities, not as unwelcome interruptions of effective teaching; but, rather, as opportunities for teaching. For children's experience of a co-operative attack upon such difficulties as they themselves genuinely feel, is of greatest significance in their own growth of character. *That experience, itself, is an experience of living in right relations with one another while as a group they seek still better Christian living.*

Let us think of two kinds of problems which a group of children in the church may confront and co-operatively seek to solve. The first is in the realm of mental difficulties over religious ideas, and the second is in the realm of social relations.

Participation in Mental Problem-solving. One morning when the third-grade children were absorbed in their work, Joan hurled out this question: "Mrs. D, there's something been bothering me. How did the world happen to begin? Where did the first person come from?" The children seemed electrified by this question. "I want to know about that, too," said one after another.

After school that morning the teacher and the supervisor held a long conference. A unit of work was already well under way, but the children were eager for light upon this particular question. It was decided to try to lead the group in a study of origins. The teacher and supervisor began assembling material, and making themselves more familiar with it. When the first day of the new "unit" came, browsing tables were ready, filled with interesting books and pictures.

First it was necessary to discover what the children had already learned at day school. They talked of the long story of the earth, and of the first living cells. They spoke with much confidence, giving such information as they already had. At last the leader said, "Where did the first germ come from?" The room that had been buzzing, suddenly grew very quiet. No one had anything to say.

"Do the scientists tell us?" "'I think,' a child said uncertainly, 'I have a book at home that would tell it,'

but another shook his head. 'I don't think that's in our books.'" Curiosity and wonder made them unsatisfied until they could gain better insight.

Then they began their study of the explanations men had given regarding the origin of the universe and of life. The Genesis account was studied closely. Children's books of science, and the long, long story of man became familiar, but always they kept returning to the thought of the great Mind who had brought it about. God came to have a new meaning for these children, which carried them to worship before the wonder of One who could do all this and put love in men's hearts so that "love changed things."

The father of one of the children, commenting upon the piece of work, remarked, "This father is convinced that his child has arrived at a solution of intellectual difficulties some twenty years sooner in her experience than did he who struggled through years of spiritual agony to arrive at any satisfactory placement of God in the universe."[4]

Lack of help from the church in such matters has condemned many children to one of three possible results. Some children as they grow older hold their scientific teaching and their religious teaching in separate compartments of thought, unable to see how the two may be made one. Others react violently against science, regarding it as atheistic. Still others react as violently against the religion which they earlier knew, becoming "radical" frequently because they were not taught to think in their

[4] From *Others Call It God,* by Jeanette E. Perkins, pp. xiii, 9, 35. Harper & Brothers, publishers, 1934.

religious life as they were in their other studies, for, as Professor J. J. B. Morgan has said, "So-called radicalism is the outgrowth of a lack of training in clear thinking in early years, coupled with excessive intellectual restraint at the very time a child should be learning independence of thought."[5]

Children also need very early to face some of the sterner realities of life. The teaching that God is love is especially open to abuse. For after the teaching which many children receive, they are utterly at a loss for any insight into the meaning of death, calamity, hardship, and suffering. Every person must face these as inescapable facts in the universe. Then why should we so often assume that we must ban all mention of them in children's groups, or "solve" the problem when it does get in by fleeing back to flowers and butterflies and songs of happiness?

Margaret B. Scott suggests, for example, that the frequent flood situations in the United States might well become a subject for consideration by children of Primary or Junior age. At the start there might be the question "Why do people suffer from floods?" There are natural causes; but there are also the effects of human ignorance and selfishness. But why do the innocent suffer? The teacher would have opportunity to lead the children to see the deepest revelations as recorded in the Bible regarding suffering; and could utilize the insights of such persons as E. Stanley Jones in his *Christ and Human Suffering,* or Weatherhead in his

[5] Morgan, J. J. B., *The Psychology of the Unadjusted School Child,* pp. 41-2. Revised edition, 1937. The Macmillan Company.

Why Do Men Suffer? Inevitably the children must see that the innocent suffer for the folly and wrong which others do. Then, what can *we* do? Not only flood relief, but a more intelligent interest and perhaps participation in preventive measures might result.[6] A study of this kind could be compelling by its reality, intensely Biblical in its rootage for thinking, and social in its outcomes.

Such types of work involve genuine sharing, by older and younger, in the quest for insights through which one may enter upon fuller fellowship with God and with one another.

Social Problem-solving. As soon as children are in groups together they begin to confront issues in their own relations with one another. Right within the group is the very stuff out of which the children may begin to learn how to live together as Christians. A teacher will see these areas of tension and possibly of unwholesome conduct in the group as opportunities for Christian teaching. For until the group becomes genuinely a fellowship in feeling and behavior, further teaching regarding God and Christian living is only settling down upon an unsound foundation.

But a group needs also to see itself as a part of a larger social whole. The next and most immediate larger whole is the particular church of which the group is a part. Frequently a group of children is led to participate in some undertaking for the benefit of the whole congregation, as in helping to clean the grounds, improve the building, and so on. In all these, and especially in rais-

[6] "Primary Children and the Floods," *Pilgrim Elementary Teacher,* XXI (November, 1937), p. 488f.

ing money, the teacher owes it to the children and to the church to encourage only those methods which are ethically justifiable, and to lead children to examine any ethical problems involved in what they propose to do. Further, there are instances where children have found their work and worship made more difficult because of attitudes or acts of adults in the church, and have sent small groups to talk things over with the older folk! Usually adults and children are helped thus to understand each other better and to co-operate more effectively.

Again, children may be led to participate more intelligently, as Christians, in the life of the neighborhood or city. Burdick and Gifford report the work of a vacation school which took for its purpose during one summer "making a better neighborhood." They "surveyed" it, noted the filth on the streets, found poison ivy growing where children frequently rubbed against it, came to realize there were dangerous traffic conditions, and the like. A nurse was asked to come and tell them about first aid. A letter to the railroad company brought workmen to remove some of the poison ivy, and the children gained better insight into ways by which they might co-operate with the company in preventing accidents and respecting property rights. The Street Commissioner's aid was enlisted in cleaning the streets; and he helped the children to understand why one section, which was not in the city, could not be aided without increased taxation. The Chief of Police also came to the school, agreed to furnish better protection at a dangerous intersection, and led the children to understand how they might co-operate better in the prevention of accidents. This,

again, is helping the growth of character right in the midst of just such situations as make or mar character in some of its most significant aspects.[7]

Such undertakings, and many others like them,[8] are instances of guiding the growth of character by making it possible for children to participate in the living of a Christian group who are seeking solutions for social problems, endeavoring to live more worthily with the neighbor as Christians. And they become increasingly significant in proportion as the area in which Christian living is actually being sought and experienced, spreads out beyond the church. For then we see children taking their part not merely by living together as Christians in a sheltered "department," important as that is; but beginning also to participate as younger citizens in the kingdom of God.

We began our study with the reminder that the Christian teacher's relation to a child is that of a friend. Upon that same basic idea we end it.

Often it will seem to you that your effort to enter more deeply into this friendship with a child is yielding little of those results which you most desire. Those hours may be the very ones when you most need to remember that the results of an understanding friendship are not to be measured only by what you can see that day. Who can know whether great things are taking place within

[7] Burdick, T. J., and Clifford, J., *Making a Better Neighborhood.* Beacon Press, 1935.

[8] Compare, for example, Wagner, M. G., *City Life and Primary Children.* Pilgrim Press, 1935; and Burns, Riggs, and Baxter, *Children and Labor Problems.* Pilgrim Press, 1935.

a child, perhaps at the moment you least expect it? Weatherhead tells a story of such events as often happen even on a "bad day," when friendship for a teacher paved the way for a greater faith and allegiance.

"I shall never forget staying for a week-end during the war with a gifted lady who had a letter from a man unknown to her, written in the trenches before an offensive. . . . He said that he was once in her Sunday-school class. She had spoken of Christ as the boys' Hero. He mentioned the date when she had altered his whole boyish outlook. He said he was going over the top very soon, but he wanted to write and say that all was well with him. The interesting thing was that she had kept a diary. While I was there she turned up the date. She found that she had come home very disconsolate, almost determined to give up teaching. She had made an entry something like this: 'Had an awful time. The boys were so restless. I am not cut out for this kind of thing. I had to take two classes together. No one listened, except, at the end, a boy from the other class named Murray seemed to take it in. He grew very quiet and subdued. But I expect he was just tired of playing up.' Not that time. 'The wind bloweth where it listeth'—and that afternoon a boy was being 'born of the Spirit.' "[9]

Suggestions for Discussion

1. Review the previous chapters and discussions, bringing out the way in which the idea of friendship between teacher and child has been presented as a basic essential in Christian education.

[9] Weatherhead, Leslie D., *Jesus and Ourselves,* pp. 56-57. Copyright, 1931. Reprinted by permission of The Abingdon Press.

2. Connect this "friendship" with the New Testament idea of "fellowship."

3. How can a wholesome relationship between teacher and child supplement the more basic relationships within the family? Is it possible for a Christian teacher to provide compensation for lacks in family relationships?

4. Be sure that the group thoroughly grasps the idea of "reconstruction through a relationship." Apply this to one or more instances of problems in children's personality or character as presented earlier in this course by members of the group.

5. Discuss the section entitled "Fellowship in Christian Groups," so as to make it clear that the principles seen in regard to friendship and fellowship between two, hold true also in the group if group relationships are Christian.

6. Bring out the importance of social participation in a Christian group, as a way of helping a child to have the experience of taking a responsible part in actual Christian living. Make the meaning clear by examples, as in this chapter, or others.

7. As the group disbands, seek to help them carry away the idea that the most important element in the nurture of children's personality and character, is the relationships between individuals and in groups; that if these are Christian in spirit, the formal "teaching" is based on good foundations.

"My Friend"

10. Summarize your paper: (a) My friend's needs as a growing person; (b) How I may help in meeting these needs.

Other Reading

Material on the subject of this chapter is scattered so as not to be very suitable in a bibliography of this nature. It is probably well to take, as reading assignments, references already cited in previous chapters which one wished to read but was unable to reach.

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